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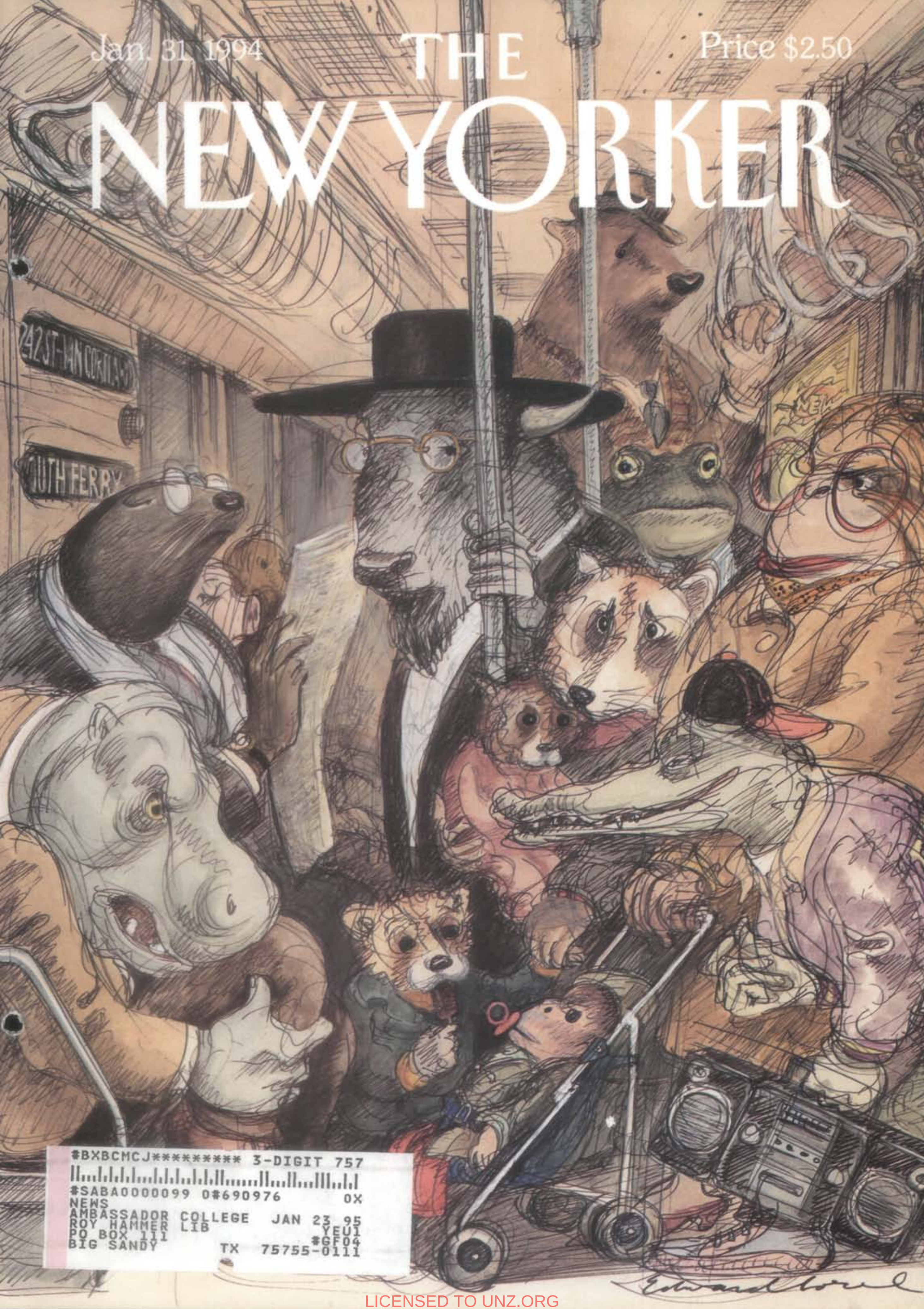
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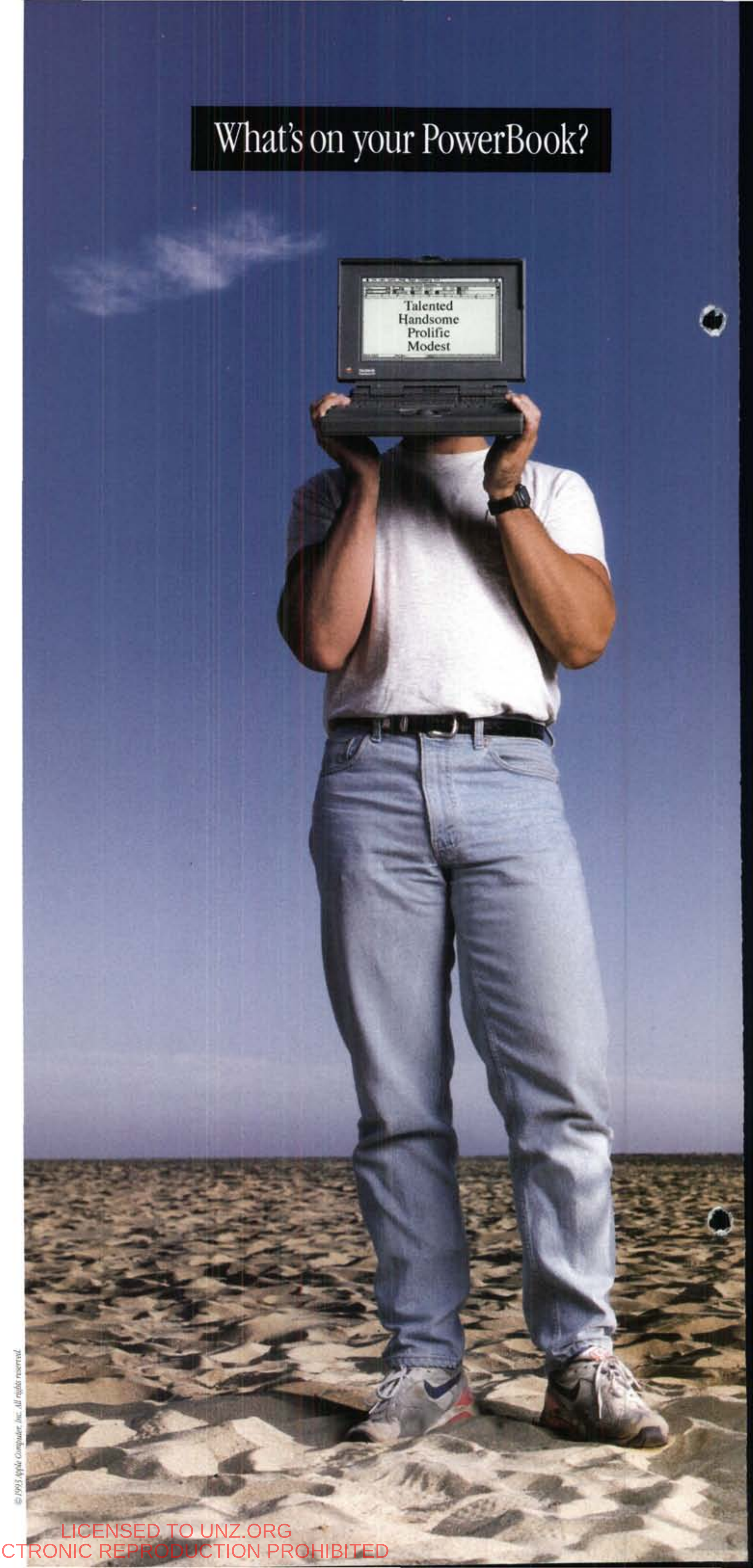

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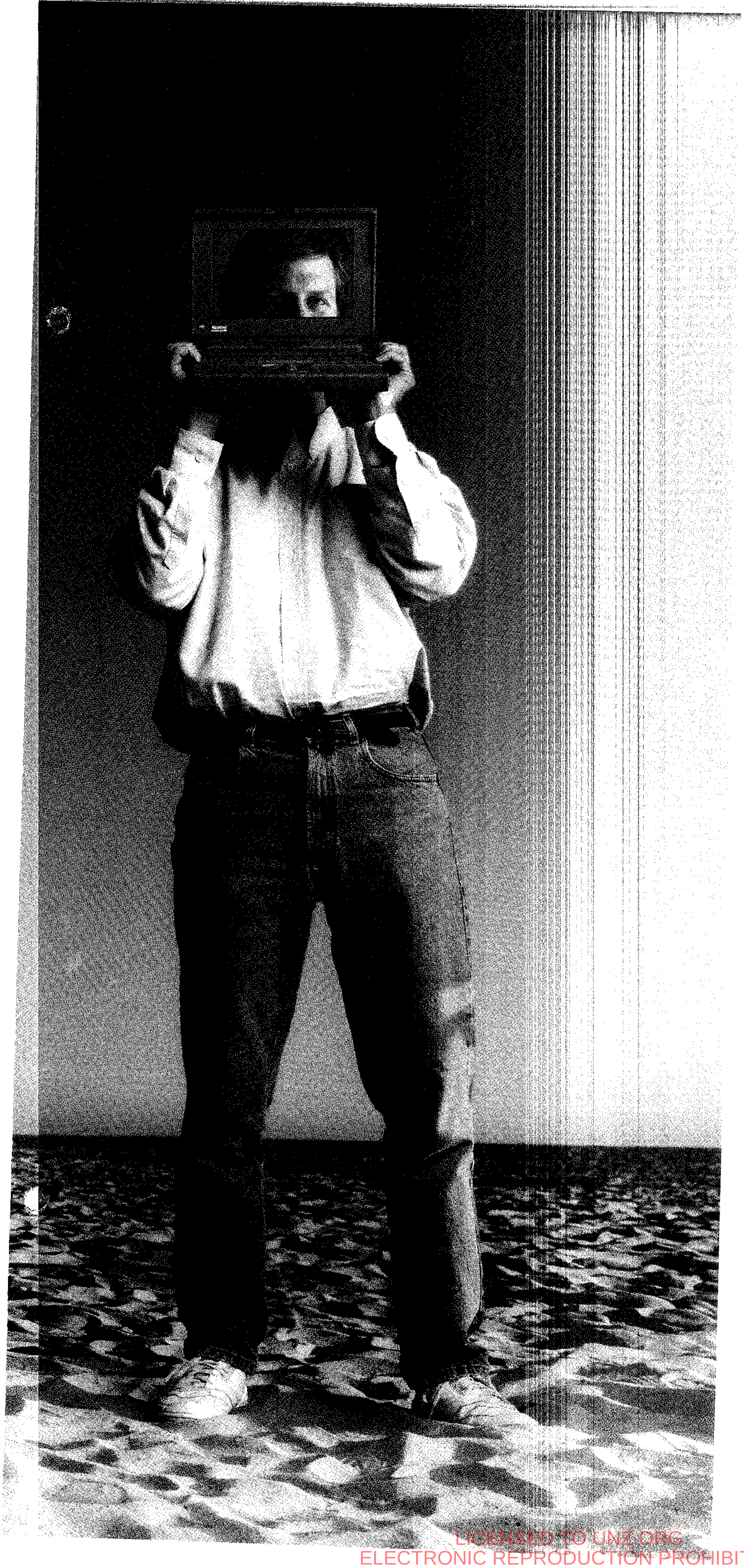

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THE NEW YORKER

JANUARY 31, 1994

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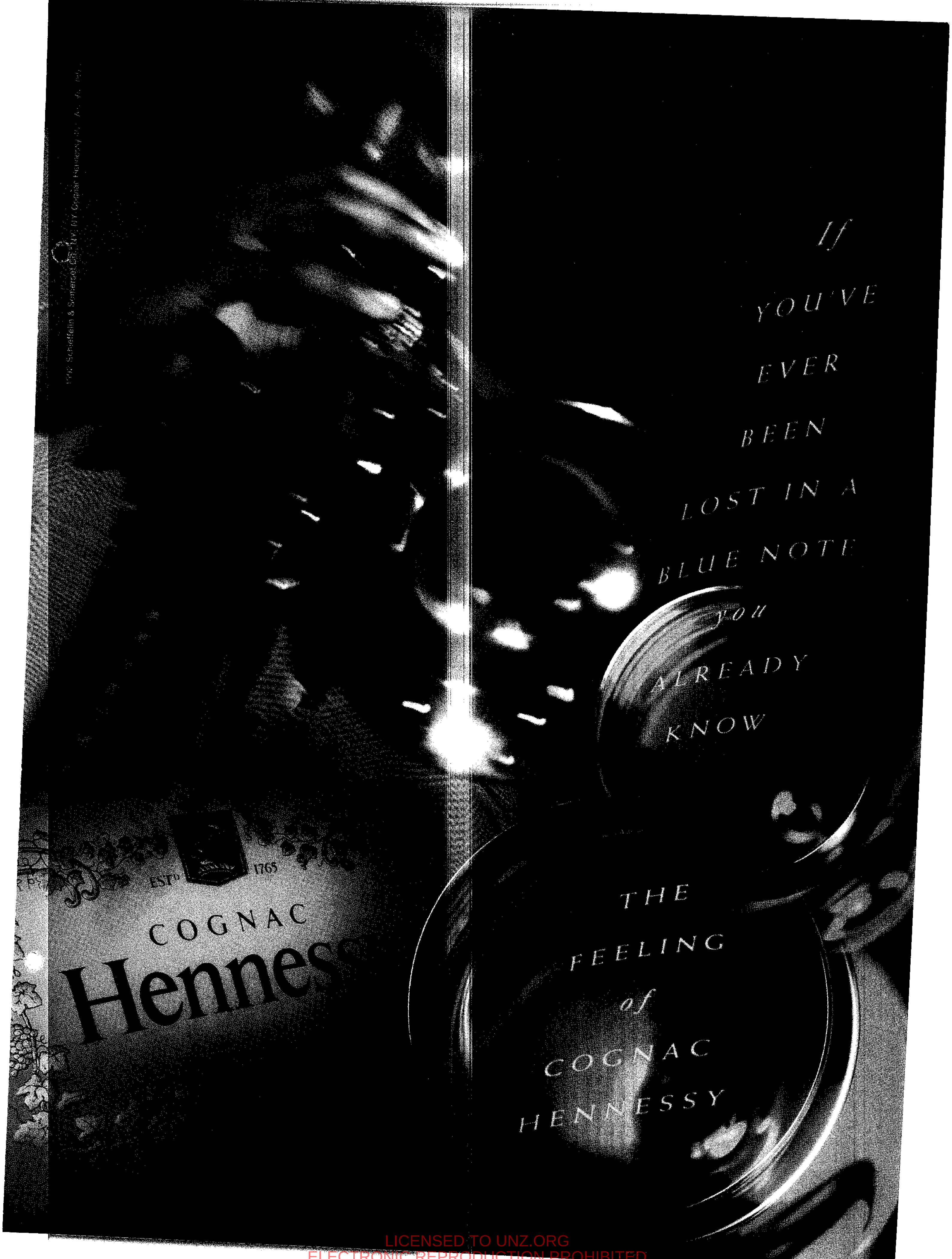
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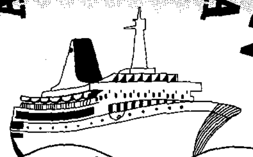

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COMMENT

DISASSEMBLING CALIFORNIA

When the upper deck of the Nimitz Freeway collapsed in Oakland, California, during the earthquake of October, 1989, the collapsing began where the freeway left natural sediments and moved onto man-made land. One after the next, in a northerly direction, the six-hundred-ton slabs fell, crushing vehicles and passengers in the lanes below; and this continued for twenty-two hundred yards, stopping where the freeway left the made ground and again reached natural sediments. In San Francisco in April, 1906, cable-car tracks were bent sharply down where the rails left natural terrain and went onto man-made land. And now, last week, came aerial photographs of the Santa Monica Freeway in Los Angeles, surreally vacant, carless, nude—a stretch of it appearing to have been stomped down, having collapsed in the night during the earthquake. In the fourteen miles from downtown Los Angeles to the sea, this was the only site where the Santa Monica Freeway failed. It crosses La Cienega there. "Cienega" means "swamp."

Hold three playing cards in your hands and tilt them away from you like a gambler waiting for a hit. The break between the top and the middle card represents the main thrust fault of the 1971 earthquake under the San Fernando Valley. The break between the middle card and the bottom card represents the main thrust fault of the 1994 earthquake under the San Fernando Valley. The tilt of these essentially parallel faults is to the north. In each earthquake the lower side slipped north, the upper side moved south. In each earthquake, the north-south dimension of the basin shortened somewhat, and its adjacent mountains went up a couple of feet. This local compression began in relatively recent time when the Pacific Lithospheric Plate, moving essentially northward, sort of shouldered into the North American Plate where the San Andreas Fault presents an awkward curve that is known in geology as a prominent restraining bend. The mountains went up. People

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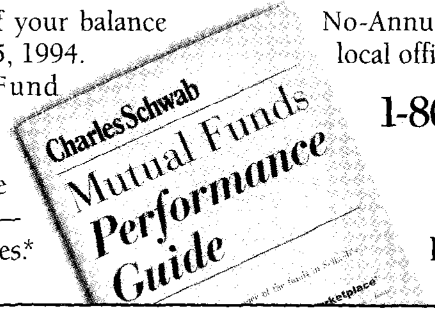

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"I think they should appoint a special prosecutor to see how we got into this mess."

• •

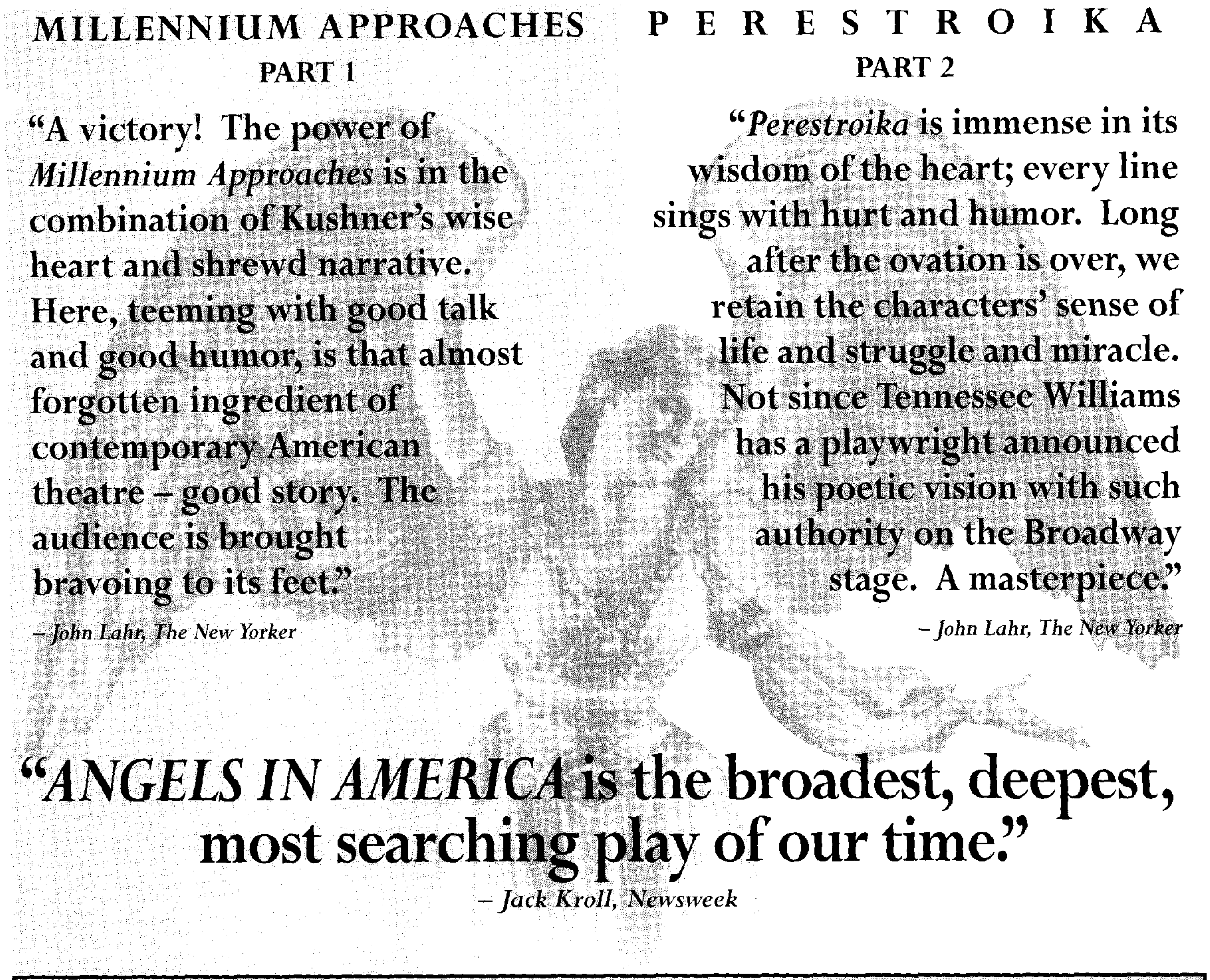
came, and Los Angeles went up. The mountains, hills, anticlines will continue to go up, the basin will continue to be compressed, as long as the Pacific Plate keeps pushing into the restraining bend. The Pacific Plate, sliding, weighs three hundred and forty-five quadrillion tons.

The Whittier Narrows earthquake of 1987 occurred under the Los Angeles Basin ten miles east of the downtown skyscrapers. The earthquake did not rupture the surface. Geologists had had no idea that a fault existed under Whittier Narrows. If a so-called blind thrust was down there, other blind thrusts might exist throughout the basin. Those three cards in your hands could be a whole deck. Across recent geologic time, any number of significant earthquakes could have taken place under Los Angeles and left no discernible trace. The Southern California Earthquake Center selected Jay Namson and Thom Davis—structural geologists—to do a cross-section study from the ocean at Santa Monica north into the San Gabriel Mountains. Their completed work shows a thrust plane nine miles under Northridge in the San Fernando Valley, the hypocenter of last week's earthquake. The fault that slipped under Northridge may, in fact, be a westerly extension of the fault under Whittier Narrows. Downtown Los Angeles lies between.

Like a city planner, the plate motions have created Los Angeles. The plate motions have shaped its setting and its setting's exceptional beauty, raising its intimate mountains ten thousand feet. The mountains are such a phalanx that air flowing in from the west cannot get over them, and a result is the inversion layer that concentrates smog. Plate motions in Los Angeles folded the anticlines that trapped the oil that rained gold and silver into the streets. Plate motions have formed a basin so desiccated that water must be carried to it five hundred miles. Plate motions have built the topography that has induced the weather that has brought the fire that has prepared the topography for city-wrecking flows of rock debris. Plate motions are benign, fatal, eternal, causal, beneficial, ruinous, continual, and inevitable. It's all in the luck of the cards. Plate motions are earthquakes. ♦

ANGELS IN AMERICA

BY **TONY KUSHNER** WITH KATHLEEN CHALFANT, DAVID MARSHALL GRANT, MARCIA GAY HARDEN, JOE MANTELLO, ELLEN McLAUGHLIN, LARRY PINE, STEPHEN SPINELLA, JEFFREY WRIGHT, DIRECTED BY **GEORGE C. WOLFE**



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SU	MAR 27	–	3:00	PER
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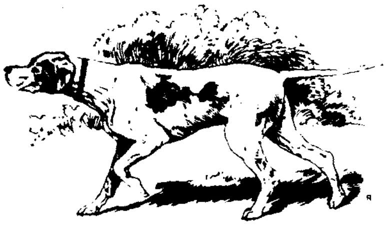

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IN THE MAIL

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In your Talk of the Town article on Court TV (January 24th), quotations are embellished or just plain false, making the journalists at Court TV seem as if they worked at a place that favors sleaze over journalism.

There are lots of witnesses, because, after all, your reporter "covered" our daily editorial-staff meeting. You can, if you choose, interview all the people at that meeting and make a judgment about the falsity of the quotes. Indeed, it seems impossible to correct the facts and *not* conclude that the quotes are false.

Examples:

1. I never referred to "black" bank guards or said the case involving the bank guards that we were considering should, therefore, be covered because it has "murder, money, race" (the lead sentence). I wanted to cover this case because when the families of bank guards sue the bank after the guards get killed in a holdup, it presents all kinds of interesting—and, yes, dramatic—issues. To this day I do not know if the bank guards were black. I'm told that all but one of them were white, but we don't know for sure, since that information appears nowhere in the trial tracking report we discussed at the meeting (and gave to your reporter). You just plain got this wrong.

So, if I had said that the case involved "murder, money, race," I'd have been lying, and your fact-checking department—which, apparently, couldn't be bothered to check the *facts* of that bank-guard case, never mind what was said at the meeting—should have caught it.

2. We decided not to cover the "white punk" case not because it "hinged on legal technicalities" but, in fact, for precisely the opposite reason: The case hinged only on a self-defense claim based on a sordid set of facts about sordid people. It involved no legal issues. (Of course, to have reported that accurately would have contradicted the motif of the piece.)

3. I never said, "That judge does bad camera." Nor did I "quickly dismiss" the Queens civil case. In fact, during the longest discussion of the meeting I argued strongly for taking that case—which we did decide to cover—because it, finally, gives us a good shot at covering the extremely important issue of women suffering from their mothers' having taken DES. So, not only is the quote simply false but it hides a point about what we cover and why we cover it that is exactly contradictory to what you wanted to publish. After all, here is a "boring" civil case about a wrenching legal issue (much like many of the cases we have covered so successfully, such as the recent Goldman Sachs sex-discrimination case, the Leonard Jeffries/City University First Amendment case, etc.). It has none of the "crime, scandal, and degradation" that you later say is the idea behind Court TV. No wonder you didn't mention that deciding to cover it was the major topic of the meeting on the day your reporter visited us.

By the way, I know nothing about the judge in that case, one way or the other.

4. Then there's the ultimate twist of reality, the next-to-last paragraph, in which you say, "Steven Brill knows that few of those drawn to Court TV are channel surfing for a civics lesson." In the one private conversation I had with

your reporter (for which you have a false quote describing me saying I gave Steve Ross a "pitch"), I told him that I started the channel in part to provide a "civics lesson" (my actual words) about the legal system. I told him that my dream (yes, I used that word, too) was to shine light on the legal system so non-lawyers could learn about it, just the way our publications for lawyers had opened up the law business to lawyers.

Lots of people have heard me say this stuff before. It may be wrong. It may be naïve. It may be a stupid reason to start a cable channel. It may even be a great act. But it's what I said, and even if the Talk of the Town didn't believe that it's also what I think, it shouldn't have said I think, or "know," the opposite.

There's lots more. For example, we decided not to cover that case of the guy killed at the rock concert, meaning you got the facts and/or decisions wrong in all the cases you described that we discussed at that meeting.

And I did not say Court TV's sound or lighting "sucks." I said they're "terrible." You obviously decided to use "sucks" so that I'd sound more like Geraldo than like the editor-in-chief of a news organization that has refused on principle to make money selling its footage to sleazy tabloid shows, that regularly avoids sensational trials that offer no redeeming value, and that the *Rolling Stone* media critic Jon Katz recently described as "the best news organization on TV, commercial or cable."

STEVEN BRILL
Courtroom Television Network
New York City

The editors reply:

Although all but one of the quotations Mr. Brill disputes appear in our reporter's notes, other persons at the meeting in question corroborate Mr. Brill's account. Errors of reporting, checking, and editing found their way into the story and we regret them.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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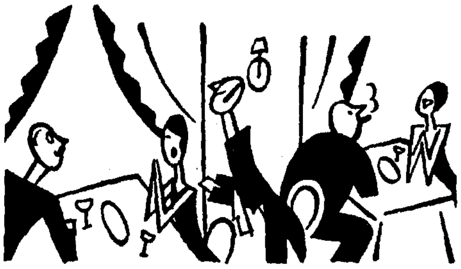


THE THEATRE

Infernal Alchemy

The days when an actress capped her career by playing Racine's Phèdre are long gone, but there are signs that classic French plays are making a comeback on American stages. Theatres have tended to avoid the hazards of putting on Racine and Corneille, Beaumarchais and Marivaux, citing box-office risks and poor translations; Richard Wilbur's graceful, witty renderings of Molière are the closest we've come to the Comédie Française. But recent adaptations of French classics by Ranjit Bolt and Tony Kushner, among others, have given new life to the Alexandrine, or at least to its approximations.

Mr. Kushner's reworking of Corneille's "L'Illusion Comique" (circa 1635) grounds the production, directed by David Esbjornson, currently at the Classic Stage Company (136 East 13th Street). His version, titled simply "The Illusion," is filled with magic tricks. Pridamant (John C. Vennema), an Avignon lawyer seeking a reconciliation with the son he banished long ago, enters the cave of the conjurer Alcandre (Rocco Sisto), who, with some rather impressive sleight of hand, shows Pridamant what has become of his boy. Dan Moran, as Alcandre's mute servant, distinguishes himself among a talented cast. With his cue-ball pate and slightly hunched back, Moran calls to mind Caliban, Quasimodo, and even Uncle Fester. His departure for Hell late in Act I is a wonderfully abrupt disappearing act.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Avenue X—An a-cappella musical set in Brooklyn in 1963, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee. Previews begin Jan. 28. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Circle Repertory Company—Previews of Jenna Zark's play "A Body of Water" alternate with those of Regina Taylor's one-woman show "Escape from Paradise." (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Death and the Maiden—The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre performs Ariel Dorfman's play, in English (three times a week) and Spanish (four times a week). The English-language opening is Jan. 27 at 8. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

Hello Again—A new musical by Michael John LaChiusa, loosely based on Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde." With Judy Blazer, John Dossett, John Cameron Mitchell, and Donna Murphy. Previews through Jan. 29. Opens Jan. 30 at 7:30. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Mama, I Want to Sing—A brief return engagement of the gospel-and-pop musical, starring Desiree Coleman Jackson, Shirley Caesar, and Doris Higginsen Troy. Opens Feb. 1 at 8 and runs through Feb. 6. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. Two previews on Jan. 26. Opens Jan. 27 at 7. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—Eric Bogosian's latest piece. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The magician, in a show directed by David Mamet. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Smiling Through—Music of the forties is spotlighted in this show about a music-hall performer, portrayed by Vicki Stuart. Written by Ivan Menchell, Miss Stuart's son. In previews. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 757-3900.)

Those the River Keeps—A play by David Rabe, with Paul Guilfoyle and Annabella Sciorra. Mr. Rabe directed. Previews through Jan. 30. Opens Jan. 31 at 6:45. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

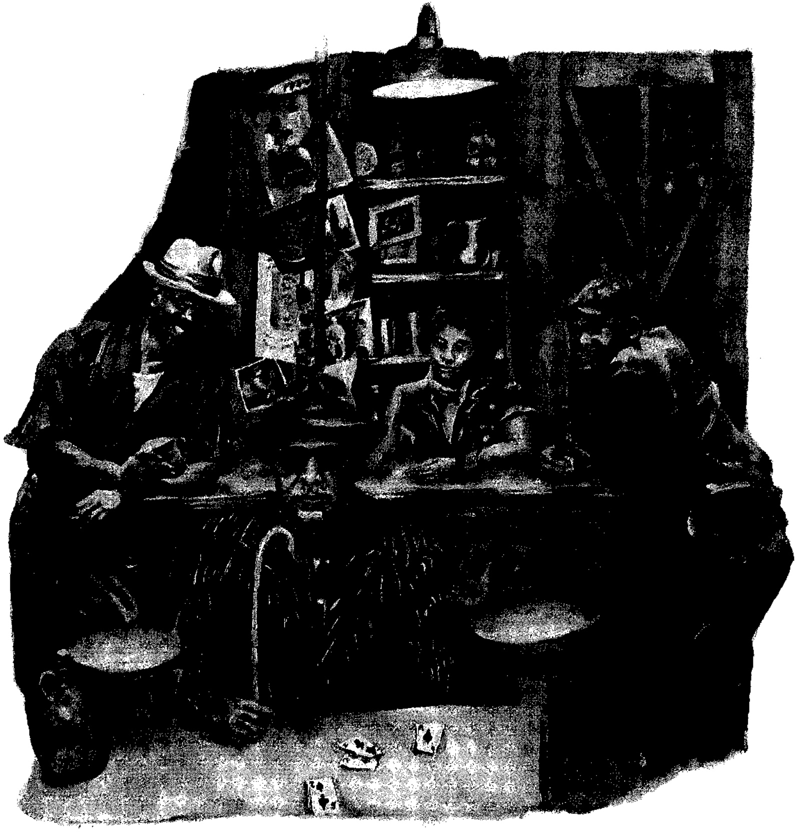
Three Birds Alighting on a Field—A play by Timberlake Wertenbaker. Directed by Max Stafford-Clark, of London's Royal Court Theatre, where the work premièred. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Three Tall Women—A new play by Edward Albee, with Marian Seldes, Jordan Baker, and Myra Carter. Previews begin Jan. 27. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—An evening of six one-act comedies by David Ives. The subjects are various (the death of Trotsky, Philip Glass goes shopping), and the literary technique is sparkling. Directed by Jason McConnell Buzas. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 777-7474.)

Angels in America—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Every line sings with hurt and humor. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Ap-



Ed Wheeler, Loretta Devine, Earle Hyman, and Curtis McClarin in "East Texas Hot Links."

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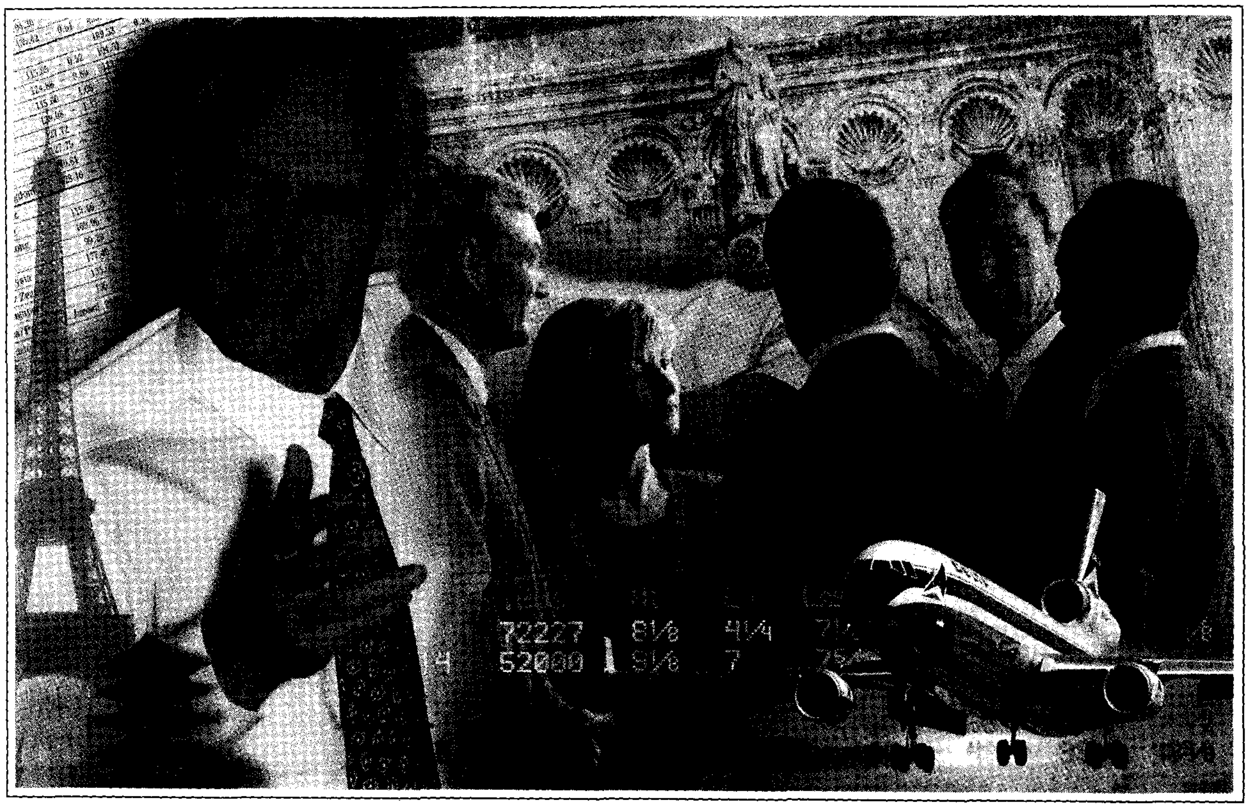

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proaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

As You Like It—Theatre for a New Audience presents Shakespeare's comedy, directed by Mark Rylance, who also plays Touchstone. Miriam Healy-Louie is Rosalind. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

Booth—Austin Pendleton's play about the nineteenth-century actor Junius Brutus Booth and his son Edwin, who are portrayed by Frank Langella and Garret Dillahunt. Presented by the York Theatre Company. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 534-5366. Closes Feb. 13.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Day Standing on Its Head—A play by Philip Kan Gotanda. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

East Texas Hot Links—The "links" of Eugene Lee's play, set in 1955 in a bar deep in the piney woods of East Texas, refer not only to spicy country sausages (and to something lewd) but also to the highly charged connections between the black denizens of the bar—seven men and the woman who owns the place. One of the men commits an act of betrayal rooted in cool self-interest—a trait he says he learned from the white men he works for. Mr. Lee, who is also an actor, has certainly written some good lines for his cast; but several characters seem pulled out of a bag of stereotypes, and while the play is shocking, it never surprises. Directed by Marion McClinton. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Feb. 13.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

The Government Inspector—The National Actors Theatre presents Nikolai Gogol's satiric comedy. The cast includes Lainie Kazan and Tony Randall. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes Feb. 6.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—A witty and topical musical revue. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

The Illusion—Tony Kushner's version of Corneille's "L'Illusion Comique." (C.S.C., 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

In Bed with the Blues: The Adventures of Fishy Waters—A play written by and starring Guy Davis. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 576-9028. Closes Feb. 13.)

Irene Worth's Portrait of Edith Wharton—A one-woman show, adapted, by the actress, from Wharton's writings. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Jewish Repertory Theatre—Arthur Giron's play is nearly swamped by the complications of its subject (Nazi persecution of Jews and Catholics) and by the unremitting earnestness of its heroine, Edith Stein, the Jewish philosopher turned Carmelite nun, who perished in Auschwitz. But the director, Lee Sankowich, and the cast have created a subtle, dynamic production. Irene Dailey, Jim Abele, and Laura Esterman (in the title role) give particularly powerful performances. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Jan. 30.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. As Joseph, Michael Damian is physically nimble and vocally wan. Everyone else conspires to wring an ovation out of the overstimulated audience. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of Eliza. With excellent support from Paxton Whitehead, Dolores Sutton, and Julian Holloway. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

My Head Was a Sledgehammer—Richard Foreman's new play, performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. For reservations, call 533-4650.)

Old New York: False Dawn—The New York Art Theatre Institute's charming version of the first chapter of Edith Wharton's novella "Old New York." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 226-6211.)

Out Is In—Comic Kate Clinton solos in her Off Broadway début. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 777-7474. Closes Jan. 30.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stitches—David and Amy Sedaris's satiric comedy about celebrity. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Feb. 5.)

Twelfth Night—The Pearl Theatre Company performs Shakespeare's comedy. (125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Jan. 29.)

Wifey—A comedy written and directed by Tom Noonan, with Julie Hagerty, Wallace Shawn, Karen Young, and Mr. Noonan. (Paradise Theatre, 64 E. 4th St. 979-7362. Closes Feb. 6.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"Dirty Dishy Divine"—A music-theatre work composed and written by Tiyé Giraud and directed by Laurie Carlos. The piece concerns African-American entertainers in the early twentieth century. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. Jan. 27-28 at 7:30 and Jan. 29 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Birdbones"—Kentucky native Dudley Saunders presents a performance piece about a Southern family in decline. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Jan. 26-30 at 9.)

"Sit Up!"—The opening night in a benefit series for P.S. 122: Ann Magnuson hosts a program with Urban Bush Women, Molissa Fenley, Pat Oleszko, Toshi Reagon, and d.j. Steven Harvey. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. Jan. 31 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 477-5288.)

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Jan. 26 at 8: "Ash," "Andantino," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 8: "Agon," "Ives, Songs," and "Chaconne." . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 8: "Haieff Divertimento," "Ives, Songs," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 2: "Harlequinade" and "Agon." . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 8: "Chaconne," "Symphony in Three Movements," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at 1: "Harlequinade" and "Fanfare." . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at 7: "Agon," "Herman Schmerman," and "Fearful Symmetries." . . . ¶ Feb. 1 at 8: "Fanfare," "Moves," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 27.)

Erick Hawkins Dance Company—Jan. 26 and Jan. 29 at 8, and Jan. 30 at 7:30: "Each Time You Carry Me This Way," "8 Clear Places," and "Many Thanks." . . . ¶ Jan. 27-28 at 8 and Jan. 30 at 2: "Intensities of Space, and Wind," "8 Clear Places," and "New Moon." . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 2: "New Moon," excerpts from "8 Clear Places," and "Many Thanks." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Jan. 25 at 7:30.)

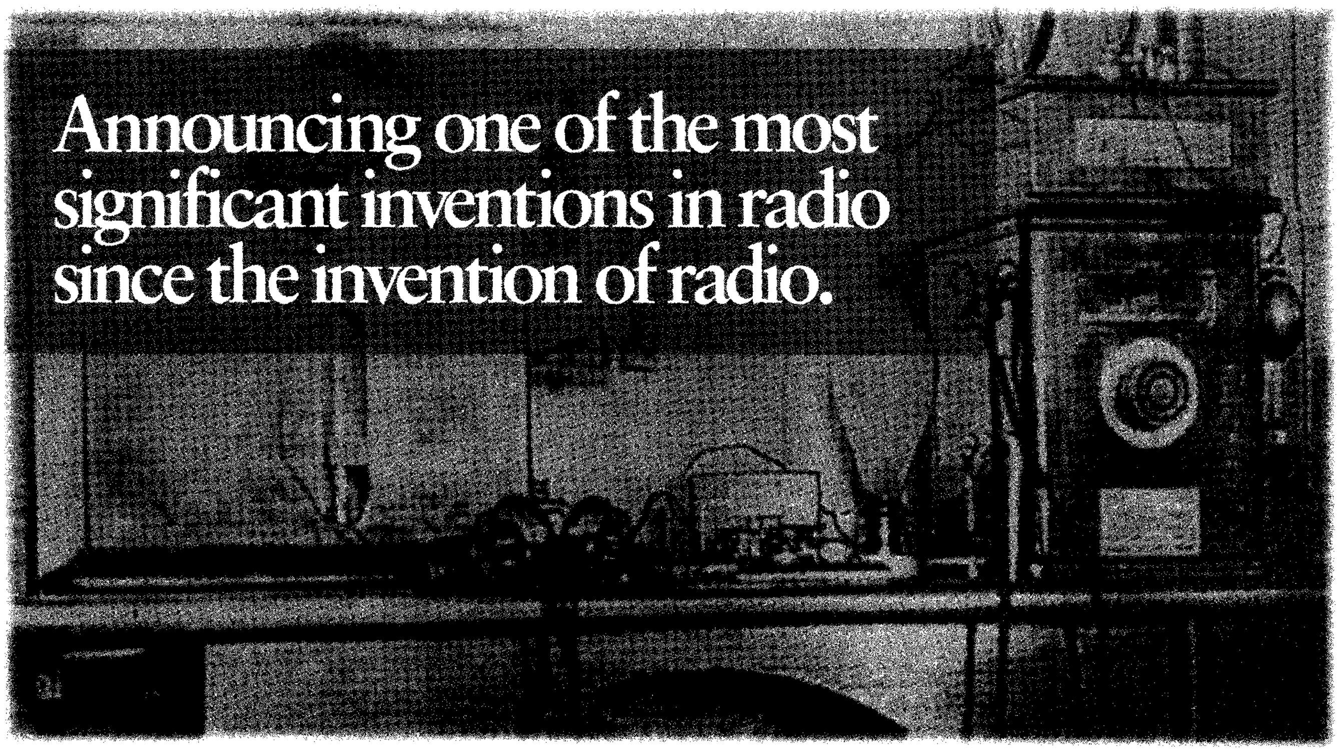
Sara Pearson / Patrik Widrig & Company—In "Do You Remember?" (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 26-29 at 8 and Jan. 30 at 3.)

Douglas Dunn & Dancers—In the New York première of "Stucco Moon," with guest dancers. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 27-30 at 7:30.)

Elisa Monte Dance—The opening of a one-week engagement: the United States premières of "Mandeville," "Diamond Song," and "Vejle / Border Crossing," plus "Absolute Rule" and "Audentity." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 1 at 7:30. Through Feb. 6.)

Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance—The opening of a two-week engagement: "A Stravinsky Montage," "Interims," "Tent," and "Tides" (première). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Feb. 1 at 8. Through Feb. 13.)

PATRICK BLACKWELL



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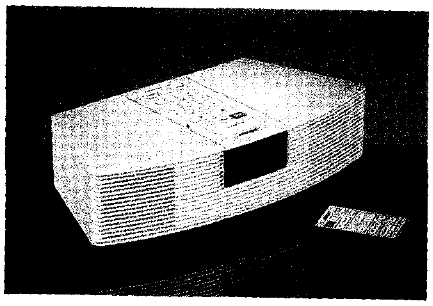

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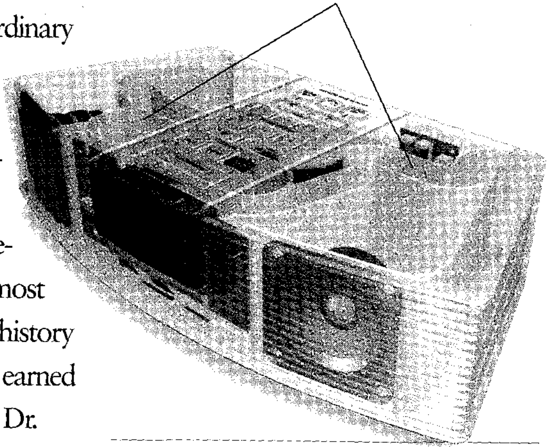

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NIGHT LIFE

The Big Beat

IN 1984, the year after the Police—arguably the best English pop band of the early eighties and certainly the most adventurous globe-trotters in rock history—released their fifth and final studio album, the trio's American drummer, Stewart Copeland, travelled to Africa, where he filmed and recorded the efforts of regional percussionists. Copeland called the 1984 album and long-form video that resulted from this experiment "The Rhythmatist." Over the past decade, he has written three operas and scores for movies and TV shows, but now he's returning to the "Rhythmatist" project, with a tour based on his African sojourn, which comes to Town Hall on January 29.

The Town Hall gig will kick off with sets by West Africa's Les Percussions de Guinea, Brazil's Uakti—a group that performed on Paul Simon's "Rhythm of the Saints"—and American singer-percussionist Vinx, whom Copeland met through his ex-Police-mate Sting. Copeland himself will take the stage with a group of handpicked international players, including Vinx, Zairean singer-guitarist Ray Lema (who was featured on "The Rhythmatist"), Spanish flamenco guitarist Rene Heredia, and Cameroonian bassist Armand Sabal-Lecco (another "Saints" alum). The drummer hasn't completely abandoned pop, however. "Since I'm not playing rock and roll professionally," he says, "I enjoy it more—just jamming with my friends, using big amplifiers. And I love *listening* to rock. I used to dissect everything I heard. Now I just enjoy it."

CONCERTS

Tony & Wynton: One on One—Is Tony Bennett a jazz singer? When you swing with as much gusto as this sixty-seven-year-old legend does, the point is moot. His most recent recording, a graceful and beautifully conceived Fred Astaire tribute called "Steppin' Out," proves that Bennett's still at the top of his game; and the onstage interplay he maintains with his responsive trio is a joy. Wynton Marsalis's own lyrical powers will also be on display when he performs with a stripped-down trio that includes his father, pianist Ellis Marsalis. A benefit concert. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Jan. 26 at 8.)

The Story—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Jan. 26 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

"Old School Throwdown"—Run D.M.C., Doug E. Fresh, the Dazz Band (remember "Let It Whip"?), Rose Royce, and others. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Jan. 29 at 8.)

Huun-Huur-Tu—The Throat Singers of Tuva. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan. 29 at 8.)

Stewart Copeland & the Rhythmatists—With Vinx, Uakti, and Les Percussions de Guinea. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 29 at 8.)

Mike LeDonne Trio—Playing music by Ellington and Strayhorn. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. Jan. 30 at 2. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Far East Side Band—Jason Hwang, Sang-Won Park, Yukio Tsuji, and Joe Daley. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 31 at 8.)

CABARETS AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**WESLIA WHITFIELD** continues to hold court in the Oak Room, through Jan. 29. She is probably the most assured and affecting jazz-cabaret voice to grace New York in years. With Mike Greensill on piano. On Feb. 1, **KT SULLIVAN** begins an engagement. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings. Be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. **LEILA PINHEIRO** starts on Feb. 1. Closed Mondays.

Tony Bennett at Alice Tully Hall.

JAY RUSSELL LEACH

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to **EARTHA KITT**. In her sixties, Kitt is still a fierce performer with a feral grip on her audience. She inhabits her songs—when she sings "I Wanna Be Evil," you don't doubt for a second that she could spit tacks.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with plenty of niceties, if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and an amazing view. **"THE LEONARD BERNSTEIN REVUE: A HELLUVA TOWN!"** continues through Jan. 29, featuring timeless songs and a stellar cast of Broadway alumni—Marilyn Caskey, Lauren Mitchell, Mark Hardy, Patrick Quinn, Ruth Williamson, and musical director Lee Musiker. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** begins a monthlong engagement on Feb. 1. Closed Mondays.

ROCK AND FOLK

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club is celebrating its twentieth anniversary with a series of bookings featuring a higher than usual percentage of recognizable names. Ultra-sensitive singer-songwriter **PETER HIMMELMAN** appears on Jan. 26, with guests **MOXY FRUVOUS**. A young Canadian band with a decidedly political bent, Moxy Fruvous at times conveys its utopianism with a goofy earnestness. Fortunately, the quartet sweetens the cant with glowing pop hooks, a saving grace that makes Moxy's début album, "Bargainville," a pleasure. On Jan. 27: **NILS LOFGREN**, with **ERIC AMBLE**. Lofgren is perhaps best known for his tenure as guitarist with Bruce Springsteen's E-Street Band in the mid-to-late eighties, but the diminutive rocker is also a fine rock songwriter, and a supple keyboardist to boot. (Check out his piano work on Neil Young's "After the Goldrush.") Lofgren's solo career—which dates back to 1975, after he disbanded the critically praised rock band Grin—has had its ups and downs, but his most recent album, "Silver Lining," was a gem. Blues legend **TAJ MAHAL** arrives on Jan. 31. On Feb. 1, folkie phoenix **JANIS IAN** stops by. Opening for Ian is **THE STORY**, a pair of sisters who harmonize in honeyed tones.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. Singer-songwriter **RUTH GERSON** wraps up a month of Friday- and Saturday-evening performances on Jan. 28-29. On Jan. 31, don't miss the distinctive soul of **TALKING TO ANIMALS**.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to burn brightly here. On Jan. 26, a rare club date with **THE B-52's** will be a show to die for. The band made a big splash in the late seventies with camp-rock classics like "Rock Lobster" and "52 Girls"; by the mid-eighties the band had become a New Wave relic. Fortunately, the 1989 single "Love Shack" changed all that, introducing the B's to a new audience beyond the college kids and hipsters who had embraced them in the first place. For this gig, the group's lineup will once again feature Cindy Wilson, whose sirenlike soprano—the higher-pitched cousin of bandmate Kate Pierson's voice—was sorely missed on their last tour. As always, the ladies will eerily mesh with Fred Schneider's hyper-kitschy sing-speak. **RAGING SLAB** rolls in on Jan. 27. Slab has been mixing punk, funk, and grungy retro-rock since the late eighties. On occasion, the New York-based quintet also accelerates to speedmetal tempos, which only adds to the fun and confusion. On Jan. 31, Chuck D's favorite hardcore band: **ANTHRAX**.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. **SOCIAL HARMONY** is here on Jan. 29.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. On Jan. 27, catch **SWERVEDRIVER**. Swervedriver became the college-rock band of the minute two years ago with its début album, "Raise," an odd mix of neo-punk venom and wide-eyed psychedelia. With its latest release, "Mezcal Head," the band has managed to avoid the dreaded sophomore jinx, and may be here to stay. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. On Jan. 30, Nik Turner's **Hawkwind,** the closest England has ever come to a psychedelic perennial like the Grateful Dead, tops a bill that also includes **Helios Creed, Sleep,** and **Loudspeaker.** The **Bogmen** arrive on Feb. 1, with **Misconceptions.**

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a slightly spruced-up tenement apartment. There's cheap food, a Greater East Village crowd, and, every Monday night, **Beat Rodeo,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various found-pop numbers.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Low lighting, muraled pillars, ironwork, a beautifully restored stamped-tin ceiling, and very little elbow room. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. **Junior Brown** plays on Jan. 26. **Adam Roth & the Blue Devils,** who can often be spotted at Café Sin-é, pay Tramps a visit on Jan. 28, with Minx and Blood Sugar. On Jan. 29: **Chuck Brown & the Soul Searchers,** the **P-Funk Horns,** and **Milo Z.** Back in 1979, when Brown was king of the Washington, D.C., go-go scene, he and the Soul Searchers had a No. 1 R. & B. hit with "Bustin' Loose." Fifteen years later, they're still touring—often with the gutbucket P-Funk Horns—and delivering the most consistent, definitive party groove this side of New Orleans. Dining.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home to an endless Summer of Love. Wetlands is a groovy, psychedelic, thoroughly Green night club. It is filled more or less nightly with young bands who like to play long, swirling jams and with throngs of young Deadheads who like to listen to them. **Alex Chilton** is here on Jan. 27. Chilton sang "The Letter" with the Box Tops way back when, but he's best known for his early-seventies work with the seminal pop band Big Star, a group that prefigured much of what today is called alternative rock. He's never found his own row to hoe, but there are flashes of genius every time he performs.

JAZZ AND BLUES

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. Singer **José Feliciano** continues through Jan. 30. Beginning Feb. 1: the **Joe Sample** trio. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A venerable piano-and-bass preserve. The **James Williams** trio stays through Jan. 29. In the mid-eighties, pianist Williams held his own in Art Blakey's last great band, alongside Wynton Marsalis; he's been impressing New Yorkers with his sturdy bop stylings ever since. Dining.

Down Beat, 101 Seventh Ave. S. (620-4000)—A long, warm, wood-panelled room with upholstered banquettes, a nicely appointed bar, and a reliable roster of jazz names. Murals of Diz, Bird, and Basie adorn the walls, so the players are always in good company. The **Mulgrew Miller** trio plays though Jan. 30. Miller, one of the most promising pianists around, has played with Betty Carter and with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Last year, he released an excellent album, "Hand in Hand," with a supporting cast of stars and stars-to-be.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz grotto. Through Jan. 30: the **Joe Morello** quartet. An exacting drummer, Morello was one of two heroes in the extremely popular Dave Brubeck group of the fifties and sixties. (The other was the poetic saxophonist Paul Desmond.) With Brubeck's mania for tricky time signatures and shifting rhythmic ploys, Morello had his work cut out for him, but his own quartet, with Ralph Lalama on tenor, swings straighter and decidedly harder than his old boss's band. The **Charlie Byrd** trio kicks off an engagement on Feb. 1. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld drawings. Up front at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. **Joanne Brackeen** and **Cecil Mc Bee** team up through Jan. 29. Tapping into the contemporary wellspring created by Tyner, Hancock, and Evans, pianist Brackeen has fashioned an engaging personal sound. Everything she touches, from American songbook standards and Brazilian melodies to her own modernist pieces, is stamped with jazz authority. Like an old married couple, she and bassist McBee, her longtime colleague, seem to read each other's minds, completing each other's musical sentences.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the square-by-definition Upper East Side club scene. Don't expect to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. On Jan. 27, the great blues harpist **Junior Wells** makes a special appearance, with **Bill Perry.** Wells, a disciple of Sonny Boy Williamson, established himself four decades ago as a harmonica master among the finest purveyors of postwar Chicago blues. He is perhaps best known for his celebrated collaborations with guitarist Buddy Guy.

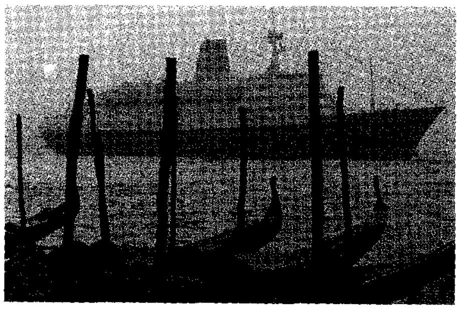
Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The main dining room strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. Singer **Carolyn Leonhart** is here with Michael Leonhart on trumpet and Grady Tate on drums. Ms. Leonhart has a smooth vocal style that will soon be heard on the soundtrack of Hal Hartley's new film, "Amateur." On Monday evenings, Woody Allen continues his night job, playing clarinet in a Dixieland-jazz ensemble known as the **New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra.**

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. Through Jan. 30: the **World Saxophone Quartet,** with **African Drums.** The mighty quartet appears to be in transition: Julius Hemphill's retirement has opened a revolving second-alto position, and tenor giant David Murray will be absent for this engagement. The **Enja All-Stars** arrive on Feb. 1. The **Gil Goldstein** orchestra is in action on Mondays. Dining.

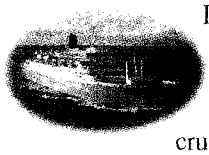
Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. Through Jan. 30: a big band led by **Illinois Jacquet.** The last of the great swing-era tenor saxophonists, Jacquet pilots his big band through arrangements that call to mind the rough-and-tumble charms of Count Basie and Lionel Hampton—leaders the young Jacquet apprenticed with. The **Freddy Cole** trio begins on Feb. 1. Dining.

VISTAFJORD'S EUROPE

THE OLD WORLD



HAS NEVER BEEN MORE CIVILIZED.



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CUNARD

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. The **HOLLY COLE** trio performs through Jan. 26. The trio's minimalist jazz-and-pop approach to standards was given a gorgeous showcase last year by Don Was, who produced its début album, "Don't Smoke in Bed." Among the album's gems is a bolerolike rendition of "I Can See Clearly Now," in which Cole's voice starts off cool and misty, then gradually opens up to evoke that bright, bright sunshiny day. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The **CYRUS CHESTNUT** trio performs through Jan. 30. Why does the twentysomething Chestnut stand out from the gaggle of young hot-shot pianists in New York? It's a matter of authenticity: Chestnut's fluency with blues phraseology, his unaffected romanticism, and a splendid touch that never glosses over a battering-ram rhythm section. He loves detailed arrangements full of crafty, shifting dynamics, just the way his sometime boss Betty Carter does. The **LOU DONALDSON** quartet begins on Feb. 1. With one foot in virgin bop soil and the other in R. & B., alto saxophonist Donaldson pledges allegiance to both virtuosity and grooves. His timing—as a bop soloist and a joke teller—has Swiss precision.

ART

Page Maker

SOMETIME in or around the summer of 1454, Johannes Gutenberg, a goldsmith from Mainz, Germany, depressed the lever of his new invention—a one-and-a-half-ton oak press equipped with twenty-five hundred pieces of interchangeable type—and set in motion a revolution. Gutenberg's printing press, probably inspired by the workings of a Rhineland winepress, was the result of almost twenty years of secretive work, and there's reason to believe that the process of invention turned him into a borderline paranoiac—at one point, apparently convinced that his ideas were being copied, he melted down some of his metal types. The world's first press run, in 1454-56, yielded more than a hundred and fifty Latin Bibles. Gutenberg, however, after years of experimentation requiring a tremendous infusion of other people's money, was forced to declare bankruptcy, and his primary creditor and business partner foreclosed on his firm. Little is known about Gutenberg's subsequent activities.

As we speed up the on-ramp to the information superhighway, it seems appropriate to honor the father of the printed word, whose fate it was to end up broke. Beginning this week, the Morgan Library will attempt to show that Gutenberg's work would have been a good investment. "Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing" will feature a series of live demonstrations on a full-scale working replica of the original press, on loan from the Gutenberg Museum, in Mainz. J. P. Morgan's three elegant Gutenberg Bibles—two on paper and one on vellum, representing the largest single collection in the world—will also be showcased.

MUSEUMS

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Degas Landscapes" features seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes that reveal a lesser-known side of Degas's œuvre: the great outdoors. The exhibit includes a tremendous range of styles and natural vistas, from early Italian countrysides to mature, deftly rendered French seascapes. Many of the images are on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. . . . ¶ "Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s." (Opens Feb. 1.) . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings, with work by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. . . . ¶ "Recent Work," a mini-retrospective of more than fifty por-

PORTRAIT OF GUTENBERG
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"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing," at the Morgan Library.

JACK MOLLOY

traits by Lucian Freud. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute celebrates five decades of the work of Diana Vreeland. The show, billboarded with photographs and magazine layouts from her years as fashion editor of *Harper's Bazaar* (1936-62) and editor-in-chief of *Vogue* (1962-71), illustrates Vreeland's canny vision, based on a fascination with nature, art, and the exotic. . . . ¶ "The Gold of Meroe" features the jewelry of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, an ancient Nubian ruler. The Queen's cache has more than two hundred pieces of colored glass, semiprecious stones, silver, and, of course, loads of gold. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee," comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the Museum's Bauhaus collection, including Kandinsky's twelve-print portfolio "Kleine Welten" ("Small Worlds," 1922). . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari," MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years. . . . ¶ "Projects: Sarah Lucas and Steven Pippin" showcases the work of two young British artists who use such objects as false teeth and razor blades in their installations. Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Work from the permanent collection is currently on view. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by an old standby and crowd pleaser, the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), whose art has been so well assimilated into the mainstream that it feels like a kind of modernism lite. It is difficult to imagine that these delicate and witty works might once have seemed radical and outré. Of the major early modernists, Kandinsky was perhaps the most eclectic in his stylistic and thematic borrowings, drawing on Russian folk art, chinoiserie, Picasso, Klee, Malevich, and the Surrealists. The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—More than a hundred and sixty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and site-specific installations by Mike Kelley. Through Feb. 20. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition of work by photographers Walker Evans (1903-75) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Both are heavy on urban and suburban drear: tract housing, diners, billboards, and the landscape of commerce are the recurrent motifs. Evans' severe black-and-white pictures are pure Americana, with an overlay of Baudelairean wandering and melancholia. By contrast, Graham's bright-colored pictures of suburban façades, back yards, and glass buildings resemble anonymous snapshots. Their mood is cold, ironic, Warholian. Graham also makes videos, and several are on display along with his photographs. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Celestial Fender Bender: The Peekskill Meteorite" presents what may be the world's first cosmic car wreck: a 1981 Chevy Malibu and the meteorite that flattened it in Peekskill. Through Jan. 31. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. The exhibit includes wonderful tiny pieces, like a bright-blue faience monkey with pierced ears, and monumental thanatological displays, like the sarcophagus and mummy of Thothirdes. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"The Ideal Home: 1900-20." Through Feb. 27. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Fancy Fronts: Men's Waistcoats from the Eighteenth Century." Through Feb. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—A permanent exhibition, called "Culture and Continuity," that examines issues of identity, values, and culture. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there will be printing demonstrations on a replica of a Gutenberg press. . . . ¶ "Seeds of Discord: The Politics of Slavery" contains, among other historical materials, abolitionary writings by Washington, Madison, Emerson, Frederick Douglass, and John Quincy Adams. . . . ¶ "To Trick the Eye: The Birth of Italian Theatre Design." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Bad Girls." Bars of soap inscribed with brazen potty talk, poster-size color photos of Homer Simpson and Princess Jasmine (of "Aladdin") wearing turbans that are actually someone's testicles, a Topless Hall of Fame, and photos of men in dresses are among this hodgepodge collection of "naughty" art. Anyone who suffered a female adolescence—directly or indirectly—will connect with Portia Munson's "Pink Project." An abject shrine to womanhood, the work is built from hundreds of sickly-pink plastic objects associated with women, from girlhood to menopause: dolls, toy tea sets, tiny comb-and-brush sets, laundry-detergent bottles, telephones, and dangerous-looking beauty aids. It's an apt metaphor for the cheapest clichés of femininity. If this doesn't make you consider giving your six-year-old daughter (or son) a subscription to *Ms.*, Carrie Mae Weems's "Bride" is more blatant: on closer examination of the typically cloying wedding portrait, you notice the beautiful bride's mouth is taped shut. Through Feb. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Virginia Woolf and Her Circle" is a quick literary tour of Bloomsbury and environs, focussing on the life of its central figure. Among the approximately two hundred items on display are letters, photographs, portraits, manuscripts, and first editions drawn from the library's Berg Collection, which is the major holder of Woolf's literary work. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Alan Feltus—Enigmatic paintings of figures in interiors, incorporating postcards of Old Master paintings, by an American artist who has been living in Umbria since 1985. Opens Jan. 27. Through March 5. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Myron Stout (1908-87)—Abstractions in color, from 1950 and 1951, predating the black-and-white paintings for which he is best known. Opens Jan. 29. Through March 12. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

"Sculpture"—Bronzes by Stephen De Staebler and Henry Moore, a steel work by Melvin Edwards, a one-ton marble piece by Gonzalo Fonseca, and a ceramic work by Jaime Suárez. Opens Jan. 27. Through March 26. (CDS, 76 E. 79th St.)

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Gilbert and George—The British duo are up to their usual tricks. Once again, the figures of the artists themselves populate nearly every panelled photo piece, and they continue to use color in potent ways. In "Crowd" different shades of green create a feeling of claustrophobia, and in "Climb" the midnight-blue sky against which they have placed themselves (in hot-pink briefs) is positively galactic. In many of the works, facial features in extreme closeup become surreal landscapes. In "Bite" a gargantuan, salivating mouth, with grotesque blue teeth and bright-pink tongue, threatens to swallow Gilbert while a pair of glassy eyes stares out from below. Whether their penchant for electric colors and startling juxtapositions seems tired or witty depends on the viewer. Through Feb. 12. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Dorothea Rockburne—Four new paintings in Lascaux acrylic applied directly on the gallery walls in a style reminiscent of fresco secco. Rockburne remains a resolutely high-minded abstractionist, but a strain of Jetsons-style futurism keeps her work lively. Paintings with titles like "First Day" and "Star Path" grab you by the collar for a lecture on the history of time, then let you sit back and enjoy some Saturday-morning cartoons. Through Feb. 26. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Drawing on Friendship: Portraits of Painters and Poets"—A gentle show of portraits of artists and poets, from Ellsworth Kelly's minimalist graphite drawing of Howard Griffin (in which one short, squiggly line suffices for hair) to Red Grooms' dynamic ink study of a man and his camera in "Portrait of Rudy Burckhardt." In a self-portrait in pencil, Alex Katz displays a dry, almost brittle, self-control; every aspect of his face is restrained, from the slightly pursed upper lip to the perfectly arched brow. Nell Blaine is easy to admire here, whether for the bare-bones use of ink and brush with which she evokes a Christlike Frank O'Hara or for the swooping lines in which she enfolds a sleeping Larry Rivers. Also interesting is Ian Hornak's "Portrait of Tibor de Nagy," which, with its carefully detailed head and looser depiction of the body, evokes Picasso's portrait style during the First World War. Through Feb. 1. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Grisha Brushkin—Paintings relating to the Jewish Cabala; installations based on Soviet primers and instructional manuals; and sculptures of angels, demons, and other creatures. Through Feb. 5. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Tony Cragg—Five large sculptures by a British artist. The most imposing is a piano covered with eleven thousand hooks. Through Feb. 19. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Adolph Gottlieb (1903-74)—Paintings from 1946 to 1958, revealing major trends in the artist's career: for example, pictographs, imaginary landscapes, and labyrinths. Through Feb. 8. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Morris Graves and Mark Tobey (1890-1976)—Twenty-two paintings, dating from the forties to the seventies, underscoring the shared origins and objectives of these two visionary artists of the Northwest. Through Feb. 28. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Cynthia Knott / Mary Frank—Landscapes done with an encaustic technique, reflecting both the quietude and the turbulence of nature. / Four bronzes of the female figure, plus

ART–Cont'd

related drawings. Through Feb. 26. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935)—Monumental cast-bronze nudes by the French-American sculptor. Through Feb. 26. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

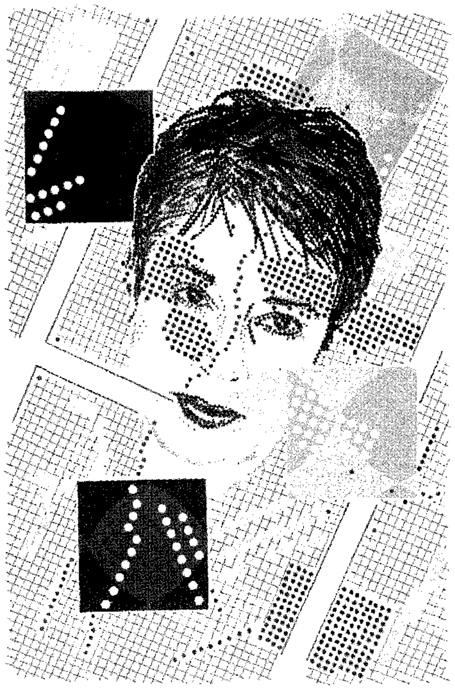
Hugh Miller (1911-88) / **Jerome Myers** (1867-1940)—Paintings of New York architecture, bridges, and waterways, as well as circus figures. / Works on paper of New York City and its inhabitants, and of the artist's family. Through Feb. 5. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"African-American Art: Twentieth-Century Masterworks"—Paintings and sculptures from 1910 to 1965, ranging in style from realism to abstraction. Among the artists are Benny Andrews, Elizabeth Catlett, and Norman Lewis. Through Feb. 12. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

"The Daniel Gallery (1912-32): A Tribute"—An exhibition honoring Charles Daniel, a champion of American vanguard art from just before the First World War until the Depression. On view are paintings by William Zorach, Alexander Archipenko, and Man Ray. Through Feb. 12. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"The Forgotten Folk Art of the 1940s"—A survey of the period, including prominent artists (John Kane and Grandma Moses) and lesser-known artists (Josephine Joy, Abraham Levin, and Patsy Santo). Through March 19. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Reorientations: Looking East"—Works by Georgia Marsh, Wade Saunders, and Ellen Brooks, who take their inspiration from the East. Through March 5. (Takashimaya, 693 Fifth Ave., at 55th St. Open Mondays, and Thursday evenings until 8.)



Jennifer Bartlett at Cooper through January 29.

DANIEL MORGENSTERN

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Al Souza / Pat Colville—Richly colored paintings with photolike imagery. / Paintings with markings and squiggles that float on an oil surface. Opens Feb. 1. Through Feb. 26. (Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

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David Salle—In what all parties concerned are calling sheer coincidence, this eighties superstar has concurrent shows at Boone and Gagosian. (Mary Boone represented Salle for a dozen years, until Larry Gagosian wooed him away two years ago.) Start with the four 1983 paintings at Boone; the most notable is "Man in a Hat," a stark and powerful work depicting a downcast, sculptural visage, rendered in a transparent veil of paint. On a plywood shelf attached to the painting is a tangle of copper tubing, suggesting the subject's inner turmoil. At Gagosian are ten new paintings from an "Early Product" series in which recurrent imagery (paper sailboat/hat, dead bird, Giacometti sculpture, lexicon of snowflakes) floats in the forefront. Salle's usual underpinnings, titillating soft-porn imagery or camp, tapestry like scenes of revelry, have been replaced by rather tired American Pop icons. "Exit Working," for example, includes a rubber glove, a pack of Newports, a Dodge, and a gift package of liquor—a well-trod trip down nostalgia lane. Six recent sculptures at Gagosian, Salle's first venture in the medium, offer a three-dimensional outlet for familiar images: a particularly unsettling piece is a cast-bronze chair, punctured and with broken rungs, with the bent glass leg of a puppet attached to the seat and back. (Boone, 417 West Broadway, through Feb. 26; and Gagosian, 136 Wooster St., through Feb. 19.)

Jennifer Bartlett—Steel plates painted with free-flowing patterns of dots in primary colors. Through Jan. 29. (Cooper, 149 Wooster St.)

Deborah Brown—Paintings of scientists and nature enthusiasts engaged in their chosen activities. Through Feb. 5. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Willie Cole—A chair made of hundreds of shoes, a flooring installation of linoleum and steam irons, and American flags with texts written on them. Through Feb. 12. (Brook Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

John Currin—New paintings of couples and men, as opposed to his usual subject, voluptuous women. Through Feb. 26. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Don Eddy—Paintings, mostly triptychs, concerned with light in landscape and water—a far cry from the artist's early realist subjects of cars and bumpers. Through March 2. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Martin Kippenberger—Fifteen paintings. Through Feb. 19. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Bruce Nauman—A video installation titled "Falls, Pratfalls, and Sleights of Hand." Through Feb. 19. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Fred Sandback—Austere drawings, plus studies for site-specific installations, by a minimalist sculptor. Through Feb. 5. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

Joan Snyder / Jessica Stockholder—Lyrical abstractions of fields of flowers, incorporating sticks, velvet, and other materials. / Abstract sculptures in mixed mediums. Through Feb. 12. (Gorney Modern, 100 Greene St.)

Robert Wilson—"Three Rooms," an installation using the natural elements of earth, air, fire, and water to unify the separate spaces in the gallery, which are individually designed with lighting, sound, music, and/or text. Through Feb. 26. (Ikeda, 130 Prince St.)

Purvis Young—A self-taught artist who lives in the black Miami ghetto of Overtown, Young has surfaced on the current wave of interest in outsider art. His paintings—on Masonite, cardboard, and other found materials, often with primitive patchwork frames—subtly reveal a concern for the plight of the underprivileged. Through Feb. 19. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

"American Self-Taught"—Ken Grimes, William Hawkins, Bill Traylor, and others. Through March 5. (Ricco-Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

"Face to Face"—The human face, in a variety of mediums, as portrayed by six internatonal artists. Through Feb. 12. (101 Wooster Street Gallery. Open Sundays and Mondays.)

"From Media to Metaphor: Art About AIDS"—Works by Keith Haring, David Wojnarowicz, and others, in a show that includes literature on AIDS. Through March 5. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Closed Mondays; open Wednesday evenings until 8:30.)

"Gol!"—The theme of soccer is explored by Matthew Abbott, Neil Miller, Bridget Smith, and others. Through Feb. 25. (Boote, 470 Broome St.)

"Shape"—Works motivated by the desire to "conceptualize" painting, by Charles Fine, Ron Janowich, and others. Through Feb. 9. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

Movie-Buff Alert—Joan Crawford stars in an auction of Hollywood collectibles at Swann (104 E. 25th St.), on Jan. 27 at 7. Among the memorabilia is a group of two hundred and twenty-five letters that trace the star's friendship with Dore Freeman, a publicist at M-G-M. Here's one tidbit: "How sweet of you to send me the precious blue and white poodle apron. . . . It's just precious, and too pretty to get soiled" (estimate: $6,000-$9,000). Other Crawfordiana include costumes and personal clothing, movie stills, photos, and a plaster portrait bust used in the film "Strait Jacket." The sale also offers photos of Greta Garbo, James Cagney, and others; movie posters from the fifties and sixties; and two velvet tunics worn by Gary Cooper in "The Adventures of Marco Polo." (For further information, call 254-4710.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Adams / Désiré Charnay (1828-1915)—Adams' monumental photographs of the modern West are full of rage and tenderness. His views of nature on the urban margins are actually images of ruins: broken trees, littered fields and lots, and smog-dimmed vistas. / Rare vintage prints of an 1863 exploration of Madagascar. Through Jan. 29. (Lowinsky, 578 Broadway.)

Nan Goldin and David Armstrong—A twenty-year friendship as seen through fifty images, from Goldin's familiar drag queens and débutantes to Armstrong's lesser-known black-and-white portraits. Through Jan. 29. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Kenro Izu—Recent floral studies and still-lifes of nudes. Through March 5. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Tony Mendoza / Douglas Prince—Images of cats and dogs. / A twenty-year retrospective including unusual landscapes and acrylic-box photo sculptures. Through Feb. 26. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Charles A. Platt (1861-1933)—More than eighty vintage photographs of Italian gardens. (Paine Webber Gallery, 1285 Sixth Ave., at 52nd St.)

David Stephenson—Black-and-white photographs of Italy and New Zealand. Through Feb. 12. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Hiroshi Sugimoto—Photographs of drive-in and indoor movie theatres. Through Feb. 5. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

"Devotion, Faith, and Fervor: The Faithful and the Damned"—A group show inspired by mythical images of the American South, with photographs by Eudora Welty, Walker Evans, and others. Through March 5. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St.)

Phil Stern's Hollywood—Celebrity photographs from the late forties to the early sixties, full of grit and glamour. The showstopper is a mid-nineteen-fifties shot of John Wayne in hot pants. Through Jan. 29. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

"Photographs Beyond Description"—A group show including work by Arbus, Eggleston, Frank, Stieglitz, and others. Through Feb. 12. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

English Horn of Plenty

WOODWIND players, those hard-working instrumentalists seated at the core of the orchestra, shoulder inordinate responsibility for the coloristic effects that symphonic composers call for. But when it comes to full-scale concertos to spotlight their talents, the pickings for woodwind players are far slimmer than for their friends the violinists and cellists. Flutists, to be sure, are not overly deprived; and clarinettists enjoy a working concerto repertoire of unusually high quality. Oboists and bassoonists are served less well, though the oboist gets a consolation prize of sorts when, at the outset of every concert, the entire orchestra aligns itself to the oboe's A.

Worse off is the English hornist, the alternately mellow and plangent alto of the double reeds, whose only standard concerto—Donizetti's "Concertino"—is not inexhaustibly subtle. The library of scores for the instrument has begun to grow, however, thanks in large part to Thomas Stacy, who has served as the New York Philharmonic's English hornist since 1972. Future generations of English hornists will thank him for undertaking what he terms a "personal take-a-composer-to-lunch commissioning program" that has already enriched the instrument's repertoire by some twenty-five works, including concertos by Vincent Persichetti and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski. On January 27, Stacy will stand before the orchestra to première the latest entry he has midwifed, a five-movement concerto by Ned Rorem. Though best known for his vocal music, Rorem also has a fine touch when painting with the orchestral palette. There's every reason to expect he will have made good on the goal he states in the score's preface: to make the English horn's tone "gleam like an opaline reed through a wash of brass and silver, catgut and steel."

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR**, with Mariella Devia, Jerry Hadley, Juan Pons, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Nello Santi. (Jan. 26 at 8 and Jan. 29 at 1:30.) . . . With Kim Josephson as Enrico. (Feb. 1 at 8.) . . . **ELEKTRA**, with Penelope Daner, Deborah Voigt, Mignon Dunn, James King, and Donald McIntyre; Richard Woitach. (Jan. 27 at 8.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**, with Helen Donath, Ruth Ann Swenson, Jane Bunnell, Dwayne Croft, and James Morris; Julius Rudel. (Jan. 28 at 8.) . . . With Susan Quittmeyer as Cherubino. (Jan. 31 at 8.) . . . **AIDA**, with Andrea Gruber, Dolora Zajick, Michael Sylvester, and Timothy Noble; John Fiore. (Jan. 29 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

NEW YORK GRAND OPERA—Presenting the first New York performance of "Jérusalem," Verdi's 1847 Frenchified reworking of his "I Lombardi," written four years earlier. Vincent La Selva conducts this concert version, with soprano Cynthia Springsteen, tenor Enrico Di Giuseppe, and baritone Theodore Lambrinos. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 26 at 8.)

BROOKLYN COLLEGE OPERA THEATRE—Presenting stagings of two one-act operas of unusual interest: Amy Cheney Beach's "Cabildo" and Vivian Fine's "Woman in a Garden." (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Jan. 29 at 7 and Jan. 30 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducts Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" Overture and a bevy of works that spotlight soloists drawn from the orchestra's ranks: the première of Rorem's English Horn Concerto (featuring Thomas Stacy), Bach's Second "Brandenburg" Concerto (with violinist Marc Ginsberg, flutist Jeanne Baxtresser, oboist Sherry Sylar, and trumpeter Philip Smith), Handel's G-Major Concerto Grosso (Op. 3, No. 3), and Britten's "Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell" (more familiarly known as "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra," here narrated by Daisy Eagan). (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 27 and Jan. 29 at 8, Jan. 28 at 2, and Feb. 1 at 7:30. . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Rorem will appear in pre-concert interviews, open to ticket holders, on Jan. 27 and Jan. 29 at 7 and on Jan. 28 at 1.)

FOCUS! FESTIVAL—Concluding concerts of the Juilliard School's exploration of twentieth-century musical multiculturalism. Jan. 26 at 8: Chamber music from, or influenced by, the Pacific Rim, by Colin McPhee, Henry Cowell, Bright Sheng, Chou Wen-chung, Robert Erickson, Bruce Gaston, Jackson Hill, Toshiro Mayuzumi, Sinta Wullur, Tan Dun, and John Cage. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St.) . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 8: Chamber works by Alan Hovhaness, Reza Vali, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Avi Eilam-Amzallag, Sofia Gubaidulina, Oleg Felzer, and Ton de Leeuw. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Jan. 28 at 8: Diego Masson conducts the Juilliard Orchestra in Ives' "Washington's Birthday," Berio's "Voci" (featuring violist Ralph Farris), Peter Sculthorpe's "Mangrove," and Roberto Sierra's "Tropicalia." (Alice Tully Hall. For information about requisite free tickets to all festival events, call 769-7406.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—Dennis Russell Davies conducts an excerpt from MacDowell's "Indian Suite," Amy Cheney Beach's "Gaelic" Symphony, and Dvořák's "New World" Symphony (with an overlay of slide projections). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Jan. 28-29 at 8. . . . **NOTE:** On Jan. 30 from 1 to 7, at the Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., the orchestra hosts chamber-music performances and lectures on Dvořák and his American contemporaries.)

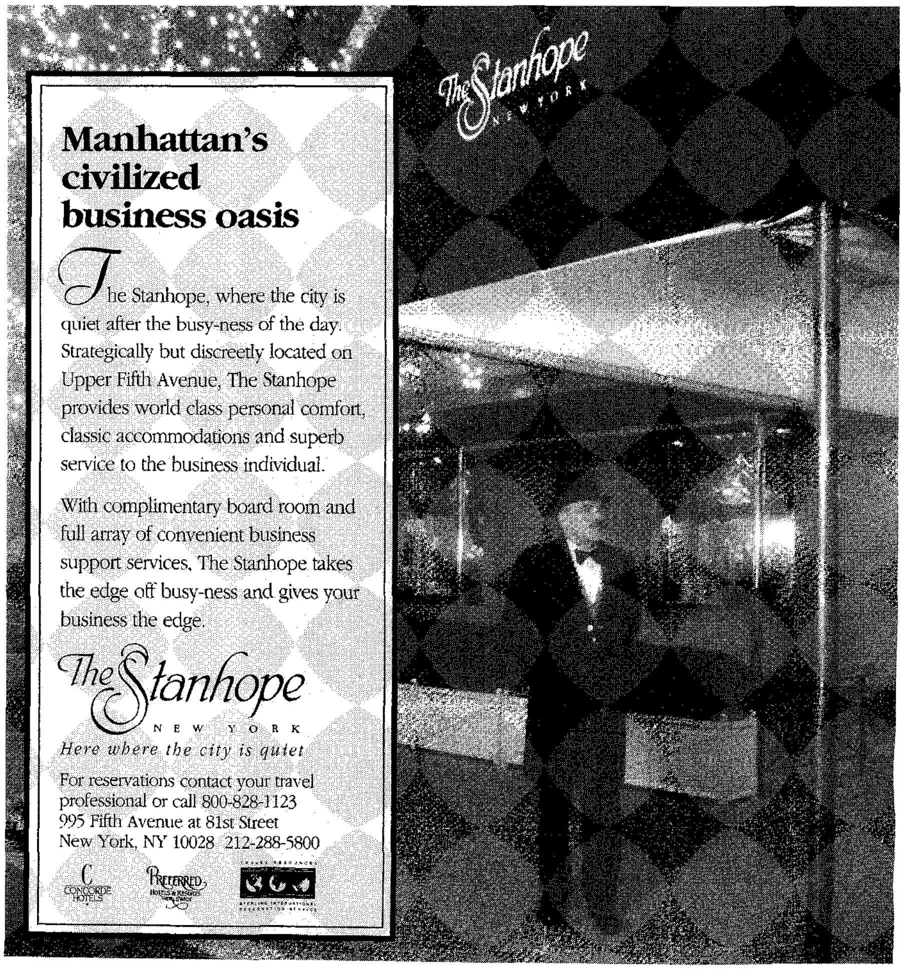
NEW YORK VIRTUOSO SINGERS—Harold Rosenbaum directs Brahms' "Nänie," Poulenc's "Figure Humaine," and works by Ronald Perera and Kurt Phinney. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Jan. 29 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 763-3453.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Gerard Schwarz conducts Beethoven's Symphonies No. 1 and No. 9. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 30 at 2.)

MANNES ORCHESTRA—Michael Charry conducts the conservatory orchestra in Donald Erb's "The Seventh Trumpet," Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" ballet suite, and Brahms' Symphony No. 4. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 31 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 496-8524.)

MANHATTAN CHAMBER SINFONIA—Glen Cortese conducts Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture, Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, and the premières of works by William Thomas McKinley and Marie Barker Nelson. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 31 at 8.)

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA—Zubin Mehta conducts Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (the



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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

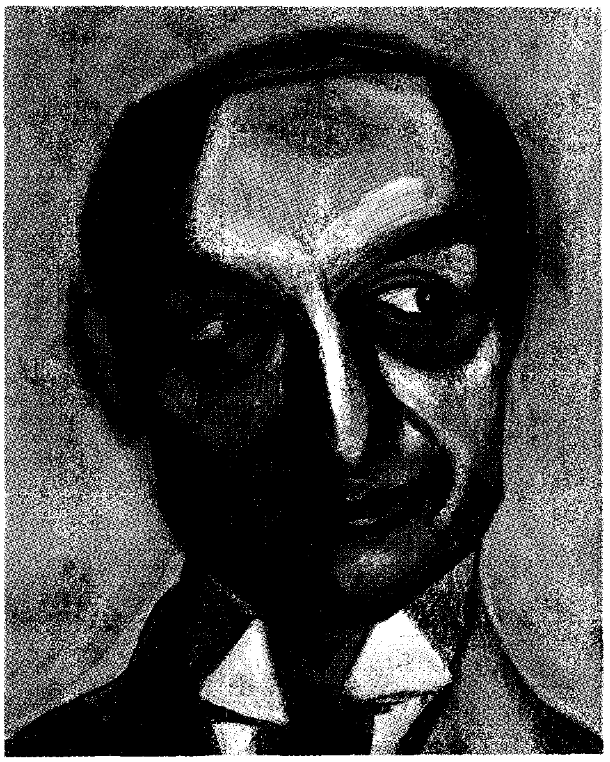
"Resurrection"), with soprano Janet Williams, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, and the New York Choral Artists. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 1 at 8.)

Concert Royal—James Richman directs his period-instrument orchestra in a mostly Vivaldi program that includes several concertos and an appearance by the New York Baroque Dance Company. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 1 at 8.)

RECITALS

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—The flutist and the harpsichordist explore the balance of the sacred and the profane in eighteenth-century Italy, as revealed by readings and in music. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 530-0571. Jan. 26 at 6.)

Pepe Romero—The classical guitarist plays a recently discovered fantasia by Fernando Sor, plus works by Turina, Tárrega, Rodrigo, and others. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Jan. 26 at 8.)



Zubin Mehta conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

ANDREA VENTURA

Cavani String Quartet—Performing Mozart's "Hunt" Quartet (K. 458), Bartók's Quartet No. 4, and Franck's Piano Quintet (with Anton Nel). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Jan. 26 at 8.)

Shauna Rolston—Cellist, playing sonatas by Debussy, Mendelssohn (his Second), and Shostakovich, among other works; with pianist Kevin Fitz-Gerald. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 26 at 8.)

Susan Glaser—Flutist, with pianist Robert Markham, performing works by four Swiss composers: Ernest Bloch, Heinz Holliger, Frank Martin, and Armin Schibler. (Swiss Institute, 35 W. 67th St. Jan. 27 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Pavel Strougalev—In his New York début recital, the oboist (the first-prize winner of the most recent, prestigious International Fernand Gillet Oboe Competition) performs sonatas by Bach and Poulenc, as well as works by Antal Dorati and Antonio Pasculli; with pianist Brian Zeger. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 28 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing Bach's "The Art of Fugue." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 29 at 8.)

Music by Ervín Schulhoff—Downtown Music Productions presents chamber music by the Czech composer, a 1942 casualty of the Wülzburg concentration camp; including his String Quartet No. 1, played by the Colorado String Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Jan. 29 at 8.)

Gregorian String Quartet—A period-instrument foursome, playing Mozart. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Jan. 30 at 11 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Anonymous 4—The women's vocal quartet performs "An English Ladymass," their assemblage of Marian chants and polyphony from the Middle Ages, the recorded version of which (a Harmonia Mundi best-seller) continues to win converts to the mystical beauty of medieval liturgical music. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. Jan. 30 at 4.)

Fabio Bidini—Pianist, in a program that includes Clementi's D-Major Sonata (Op. 40, No. 3), Busoni's "Ten Variations on a Prelude by Chopin," and Schumann's "Carnaval." (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 30 at 5.)

Zephyr—A flute-and-strings quartet, playing music by Mozart, Pleyel, Davidovsky, and others. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Jan. 30 at 5:30. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Salon Soirée—Both of Mendelssohn's piano trios, performed by violinist Anton Miller, cellist Maria Kitsopoulos, and pianist Ilan Rechtman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Jan. 30 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Thomas Otten and Alesandar Serdar—A doubleheader concert (three intermissions, no less) spotlighting the co-winners of the 1993 Palm Beach Invitational International Piano Competition. Principal works on the program include Ginastera's Sonata No. 1 and Schumann's "Symphonic Études" (played by Mr. Otten), and Chopin's Fourth Ballade and Schumann's "Carnaval" (played by Mr. Serdar). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 30 at 7.)

Mexican Music Festival—At Weill Recital Hall. Opening concerts of a weeklong showcase of Mexican music and performers. Jan. 30 at 8:30: The Cuarteto Latinoamericano, a Mexican string quartet, plays works by Silvestre Revueltas, Arturo Márquez, Manuel Enríquez, and Joaquín Gutiérrez-Heras. . . . ¶ Feb. 1 at 8: Trío Neos, an assemblage of clarinet, bassoon, and piano, performs works by Enríquez, Manuel de Elías, and Francisco Nuñez.

Composers' Forum—Three pianists especially noted as champions of contemporary music—Ursula Oppens, Anthony de Mare, and Martin Goldray—will perform works by Milton Babbitt and Conlon Nancarrow, both of whom are expected to be on hand to deliver comments. (2 W. 64th St. Jan. 31 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New Music Consort—Presenting works by Milton Babbitt, Toshio Hosokawa, and Jin Hi Kim (who will perform her own komungo music). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 362-0962. Feb. 1 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Boston Celtics, Feb. 1 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Feb. 1 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Jan. 31 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Boston Bruins, Jan. 28. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Jose Sharks, Feb. 1. (Game time, 7:40.)

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Two Ice Extravaganzas—Ice Capades: Dorothy Hamill stars in "Cinderella: Frozen in Time." (Meadowlands Arena. Jan. 26-30. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-201 935-3900.) . . . ¶ Walt Disney's World on Ice: "Mickey's Great Adventure," a live stage show with ice-skating Disney characters and professional figure skaters, continues through Jan. 30. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

I Hear a Symphony—The New York Philharmonic's five hundredth (wow!) Young People's Concert features Benjamin Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra," narrated by Daisy Eagan (of "Secret Garden" fame). Kurt Masur conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 29 at 2.)

Art Appreciators—The Museum of Modern Art's Family Gallery Program takes a look at prints and illustrations by Paul Klee. (John Noble Education Center, 18 W. 54th St. 708-9400. Jan. 29 at 10.)

"Lolli-Pops" Concert—The Little Orchestra Society and the Saturday Brass Quintet in a concert titled "Tubby the Tuba and the Big Brass." Recommended ages: three to five. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Jan. 29 at 10:30 and 11:45 and Jan. 30 at 12:30 and 1:45.)

The Paper Bag Players—In "The Paper Bag Players, Rain or Shine," the Bags take you to a rain forest, visit a city park, and encounter a dragon, all by way of their usual assortment of paper products. Suggested age range: four to nine. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Saturdays and Sundays at 2. Through March 6.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Just Folks—As part of the "Celebrate Folk" festival, the Museum of American Folk Art brings quilts, tinware, and carved wooden sculpture to the World Financial Center's Courtyard Gallery. (Mondays through Fridays, from 11 to 6, and Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 5.) Other events include a scene-painting class on Jan. 29, from 10 to 4 (to register, call 977-7170), and a free lecture about Amish quilts on Feb. 1 at 12:30 (2 World Financial Center, 225 Liberty St.).

Outside Is In—The Outsider Art Fair, which includes visionary art, *art brut*, and work by self-taught artists, will include pieces by hundreds of European and American artists, including Bill Traylor, Minnie Evans, and Adolph Wölfli. (Puck Building, Lafayette and Houston Sts. Jan. 28, from 5:30 to 9; Jan. 29, from 11 to 7; and Jan. 30, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the event.) . . . ¶ Jan. 29, from 2 to 5: A symposium on artists and art represented at the fair. Participants include Amiri Baraka, who will talk about Thornton Dial, and British art historian Roger Cardinal, who wrote "Outsider Art." . . . Jan. 30, from 10:30 to 12:30: A talk by photographer Marcus Schubert titled "Visionary Environments,

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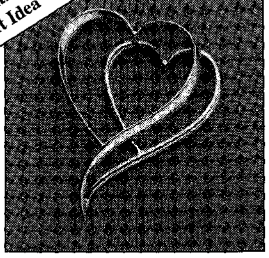

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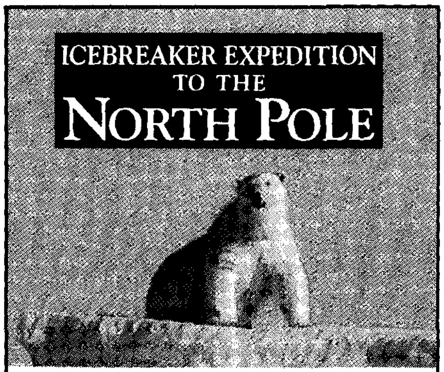

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Light My Gyre—A celebration of the life and work of William Butler Yeats will feature readings of his poems by Irish poets Paul Muldoon and Eamon Grennan and by sometime poet and politician Eugene McCarthy; songs based on Yeats' poems, set by Richard Jameson Bell and sung by Tammy Grimes; and folk-inspired settings (by Joseph Daniel Sobol) of poems, performed by Kiltartan Road, a Chicago-based musical group. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Jan. 28 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the event.)

Two Cents for Art—It's town-meeting time! To inaugurate its new digs and celebrate its twentieth anniversary, Artists Space is holding an open forum to discuss operating budgets, programming, and the use of gallery space. (38 Greene St. Feb. 1 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Home Again—The Lower East Side Tenement Museum opens the doors of its historic tenement house at 97 Orchard St. A guided tour of two apartments will give participants an idea of the lives of two of the families who lived there: the Gumpertzes, who emigrated from Germany in the eighteen-eighties, and the Baldizzis, who emigrated illegally from Italy during the Depression. (Mondays through Fridays at 11 and 2, and Sundays, every half hour, from 10:30 to 4:30. Tickets available at the museum, 90 Orchard St., on the days of the tours.)

Readings—Jan. 26 at 6:30: As part of the "Selected Shorts" series, a trio of short stories by Richard Bausch, Amy Bloom, and Laurie Colwin will be read by three actors. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Jan. 26, from 6:30 to 10:30: Sindiwe Magona will read from her new short-story collection and Yvette Davila will read from her poetry at the International Rhythm Vanguard's poetry jam. The evening also includes music and begins and ends with an open mike. (Metropolis Café, 31 Union Sq. W., at 16th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Jan. 31 at 8: Peter Cameron and Joan Nestle, among others, will read their contributions to Penguin's new gay and lesbian short-story anthologies. (Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 208 W. 13th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 31 at 8: Diane Ackerman and Tracy Kidder will read from their own work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Feb. 1 at 7: David Lehman and Peter Reading will read from their own poetry. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 1 at 8: Amy Bloom and Robert Olen Butler will read from their own fiction. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.) . . . ¶ Feb. 1 at 7:30: Hanan al-Shaykh will read from her novel "The Story of Zahra." (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Jan. 26 at 6:30: In conjunction with a model-ship exhibit at the South Street Seaport Museum, Michael Costagliola will explain how to build one in a day's time. (A. A. Low Building, 171 John St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at 3: London *Times* art critic Richard Cork will give a talk titled "The Vision of Lucian Freud." (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. No charge beyond museum contribution.)

Walks & Tours—Jan. 29 at 1: The Brooklyn Historical Society will guide participants through the Williamsburgh Savings Bank—*the* landmark of the Brooklyn skyline. For more information, call 1-718 624-0890. . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 2: The Urban Park Rangers will offer a free tour of Central Park's Harlem Meer, focussing on the connection between the plants and animals that call it home. Meets at the Dana Discovery Center, mid-Park at 110th St.

NEW YORK ON ICE

The city has some of the best and most picturesque skating rinks in the world. All the places in this sampling offer skate rental, sharpening, and instruction.

The Ice Studio, 1034 Lexington Ave. (between 73rd and 74th Sts.) 535-0304—On the second floor of an idiosyncratic building, Archie Walker, a former professional skater from Canada, has built a place that looks like something you'd wander into in a dream—a spare room with a skating rink in it. It's the size of a dance studio, with windows and a mirrored wall, and it's pleasantly reminiscent of a ski chalet. Mr. Walker acts as his own Zamboni. The rink is used mostly for private instruction, but it's open for short public sessions year round, except August ($5-$6).

Lasker Rink, mid-Central Park at 106th St. 996-1184—The city's only double rink—one rink for hockey and one for figure skating—Lasker is the cheapest skate around ($3 for adults; $1.75 for children; skate rental $2.25), with rap, hip-hop, and soul blasting from the sound system. Closed in bad weather.

EINAT PELED

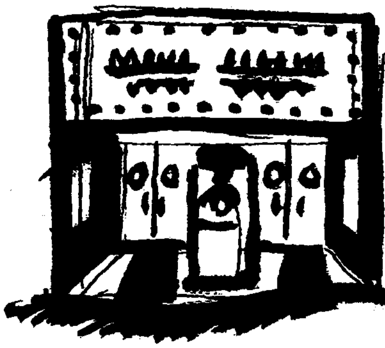
Rivergate Ice Rink, 401 E. 34th St. 689-0035—This small, unexpected rink on First Avenue opened late this season. It has somewhat primitive facilities but long hours and a view of the Chrysler Building.

Riverbank State Park, 145th St. and Riverside Dr. 694-3642—Big and uncrowded, the rink at this new state park, built over the sewage-treatment plant, with seventeen gleaming white smokestacks on the Hudson River, has the best ice in town. A vaulted steel shed roof permits skating outdoors in all kinds of weather. Neighborhood kids crash around, determined to master their blades. Friendly personnel sometimes forget to turn on the music, which is a welcome change.

The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, 757-5730—It's fun just to watch at Rockefeller Center—whether Ice Theatre of New York is performing (Jan. 26, Feb. 23, and March 30, at 1) or a solitary woman in silver sequins is twirling to her own music in the center of the rink—and it doesn't cost much more to skate here in the skyscraper district, under the gaze of Prometheus, than it does anywhere else. Though it's scenic, it's not just for tourists. ($8 for adults, $6.50 for children, for a three-hour weekend session; skate rental $4. There's a weekday lunchtime special, from 11:30 to 1, for $3.75. For information about lessons, call 757-5731.)

Sky Rink, 450 W. 33rd St. 695-6555—Open daily year round, Manhattan's twenty-four-hour penthouse ice-skating rink is cool inside, with upbeat music and colorful banners hanging from steel rafters. Lacing instructions at the skate-rental counter teach a beginner how to create a "hinge" at the ankle. Public skating hours are limited, but there's a full schedule of figure-skating classes and hockey for all levels.

Wollman Rink, mid-Central Park at 62nd St. 517-4800—On a sign at the entrance Donald Trump reminds us all that this is the "No. 1 Ice Skating Rink Anywhere in the World," and it *is* pretty spectacular, especially in the evening, when the moon is setting over Central Park South. Sinatra's on the soundtrack, and the Bootique displays a photograph of the Donald (with the wrong wife). Closed in bad weather.



THE MOVIES

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			26	27	28	29
30	31	1				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation."
Theatre 3: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 4: "Faraway, So Close" (directed by Wim Wenders; in German), with Otto Sander, Peter Falk, Bruno Ganz, Nastassja Kinski, and Willem Dafoe.
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).
Theatre 6: "Naked" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Luna Park" (Pavel Lounguine, in Russian).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson.
Theatre 3: "Heaven and Earth" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, and James Fox.
Theatre 2: "Tombstone" (†).
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 5: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 6: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.
Theatre 7: Through Jan. 27: "Intersection." From Jan. 28: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Jan. 27: A program of films from Vietnam. From Jan. 28: "Living Proof: HIV and the Pursuit of Happiness" (Kermit Cole).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.
Theatre 2: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 4: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein), with Joan Plowright, Julie Walters, Jeanne Moreau, and Lena Headey.
Theatre 5: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser), with Kevin Bacon and Charles Gitonga Maina.
Theatre 6: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 7: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid), with Mackenzie Astin.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (Lasse Hallström), with Johnny Depp and Juliette Lewis.
Theatre 4: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 5: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.
Theatre 6: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 3: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser), with Kevin Bacon and Charles Gitonga Maina.
Theatre 4: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 27: "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson. From Jan. 28: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).
Theatre 3: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.
Theatre 2: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser), with Kevin Bacon and Charles Gitonga Maina.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Wrestling Ernest Hemingway" (Randa Haines), with Robert Duvall and Richard Harris.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik), with Mike Myers and Dana Carvey.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.
Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 2: "Tombstone" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 27: "A Perfect World" (Clint Eastwood), with Kevin Costner, Eastwood, and Laura Dern. From Jan. 28: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Shadowlands" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Pelican Brief" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Naked" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (Lasse Hallström), with Johnny Depp and Juliette Lewis.

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 2: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser), with Kevin Bacon and Charles Gitonga Maina.
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 5: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 6: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid), with Mackenzie Astin.
Theatre 7: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).

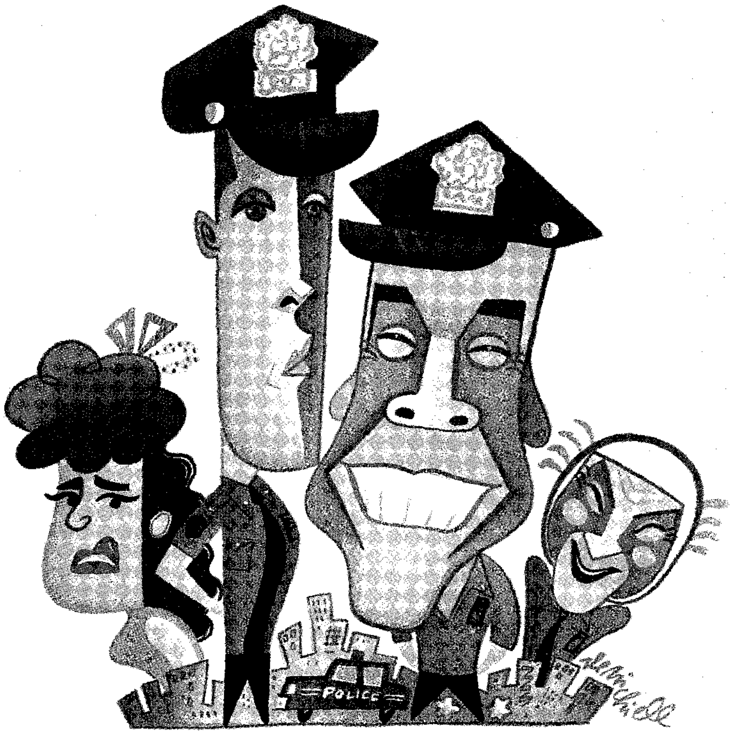
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 2: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Secuestro: A Story of a Kidnapping" (directed by Camila Motta; in Spanish), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The War Room" (D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus), a documentary.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World 2" (Stephen Surjik), with Mike Myers and Dana Carvey.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Shadowlands" (†).



Opening January 28, Rosie O'Donnell, John C. McGinley, David Johansen, and Al Lewis in "Car 54, Where Are You?"

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through Jan. 27: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish). From Jan. 28: "Bad Girls" (Amos Kollek).

Theatre 2: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French).

Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.

Theatre 3: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).

Theatre 5: Through Jan. 27: "Schindler's List" (†). From Jan. 28: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).

Theatre 6: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, and James Fox.

Theatre 7: "The Pelican Brief" (†).

Theatre 8: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Theatre 9: "Shadowlands" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson.

Theatre 2: "Cabin Boy" (Adam Resnick).

Theatre 3: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Iron Will" (Charles Haid).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).

Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

Theatre 3: "A Perfect World" (Clint Eastwood), with Kevin Costner, Eastwood, and Laura Dern.

Theatre 4: "Gettysburg" (Ronald F. Maxwell).

Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Heaven and Earth" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"A Dangerous Woman" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Household Saints" (Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lili Taylor, and Judith Malina.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein), with Joan Plowright, Julie Walters, Jeanne Moreau, and Lena Headey.

Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)

"The Trial" (David Jones), with Kyle MacLachlan.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, and James Fox.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Grumpy Old Men" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Jan. 27: "Faraway, So Close" (Wim Wenders; in German), with Otto Sander, Peter Falk, Bruno Ganz, Nastassja Kinski, and Willem Dafoe. From Jan. 28: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (Tran Anh Hung; in Vietnamese).

Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French), with Richard Bohringer, Elena Safonova, and Romane Bohringer.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Philadelphia" (†).

Theatre 2: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid), with Mackenzie Astin.

Theatre 3: "Heaven and Earth" (†).

Theatre 4: "Blink" (Michael Apted).

Theatre 5: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.

Theatre 6: "The Pelican Brief" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)

"Naked" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Jan. 27: "Tombstone" (†). From Jan. 28: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson.

Theatre 2: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Ghost in the Machine" (directed by Rachel Talalay), with Karen Allen and Chris Mulkey.

Theatre 2: Through Jan. 27: "American Cyborg" (Boaz Davidson), with Joe Lara. From Jan. 28: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).

Theatre 3: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.

Theatre 4: "Carlito's Way" (Brian De Palma), with Al Pacino, Sean Penn, and Penelope Ann Miller.

Theatre 5: "The Pelican Brief" (†).

Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).

Theatre 7: "Blink" (Michael Apted).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Tombstone" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser), with Kevin Bacon and Charles Gitonga Maina.

Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.

Theatre 3: "Cabin Boy" (Adam Resnick).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere, Sharon Stone, and Lolita Davidovich.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein), with Charles Bronson.

Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

"McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (†). On Jan. 31, two early films directed by Yasujiro Ozu: "The Lady and the Beard" (1930) and "A Story of Floating Weeds" (1934).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Jan. 26: "Desire" (†); and "A Foreign Affair" (1948, Billy Wilder), with Jean Arthur, Marlene Dietrich, and John Lund.

Jan. 27: "Five Fingers" (1952, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with James Mason, Danielle Darrieux, and Michael Rennie; and "Somewhere in the Night" (1946, Mankiewicz), with John Hodiak, Nancy Guild, Lloyd Nolan, and Richard Conte.

Jan. 28-29: "North by Northwest" (1959, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, and James Mason; and "I Confess" (†).

Jan. 30: "Diva" (1981, Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French); and "King of Hearts" (1967, Philippe de Broca; in French and English), with Alan Bates and Geneviève Bujold.

Jan. 31: "Cries and Whispers" (†); and "The Passion of Anna" (1970, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Max von Sydow, and Erland Josephson.

Feb. 1: "This Gun for Hire" (1942, Frank Tuttle), with Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, and Laird Cregar; and "The Glass Key" (1942, Stuart Heisler), with Brian Donlevy, Lake, and Ladd.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Jan. 27 at 2:30: "The Young Caruso" (1951, directed by Giacomo Gentilomo; in Italian). . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 3 and 6: "Harry Bridges: A Man and His Union" (1992, Berry Minott), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 27 at 6: "Santa Lucia Luntana: Memories of Naples" (1931, Harold Godsoe; in Italian and English) and "See Naples and Die" (1951, Riccardo Freda; in Italian). . . . ¶ A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. Jan. 28 at 2:30: Early films (1906-15) by such directors as Alice Guy-Blaché and Gaston Ravel. . . . Jan. 28 at 6 and Jan. 30 at 1: Films by Guy-Blaché, Étienne Arnaud, and others, made between 1900 and 1908. . . . Jan. 28 at 7:30: "Un Deux Trois Soleil" (1993, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Anouk Grinberg and Marcello Mastroianni. . . . Jan. 29 at 1 and Jan. 31 at 6: Animated and live-action films (1909-10) by Émile Cohl and comedy-of-the-absurd films (1912-14) by Jean Durand. . . . Jan. 29 at 3: Early realist films (1911-13) by Henri Fescourt, Georges André Lacroix, and others. . . . Jan. 29 at 5 and Jan. 31 at 2:30: "Child of Paris" (1913, Léonce Perret; a silent film, with French intertitles). . . . Jan. 30 at 3 and Feb. 1 at 6: Films made by Perret between 1912 and 1913. . . . Jan. 30 at 5: Films made by Louis Feuillade between 1911 and 1914. . . . Feb. 1 at 2:30: Films made by Jacques Feyder between 1916 and 1918.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—A program of films by Yasujiro Ozu, all in Japanese. Jan. 26 at 2, 5:45, and 9:15: "The Record of a Tenement Gentleman" (1947). . . . Jan. 26 at 3:45 and 7:30 and Jan. 27 at 2 and 6:15: "A Hen in the Wind" (1948). . . . Jan. 27 at 4 and 8:15 and Jan. 28 at 2, 4:15, 6:30, and 8:45: "Late Spring" (1949). . . . Jan. 29 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Jan. 30 at 4:15 and 9: "The Munekata Sisters" (1950). . . . Jan. 30 at 6:30, Jan. 31 at 4:15 and 9, and Feb. 1 at 2: "Early Summer" (1951). . . . Jan. 31 at 2 and 6:45: "The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice" (1952). . . . ¶ Jan. 29-30 at 2: "The Man from Snowy River" (1983, George Miller), with Kirk Douglas, Jack Thompson, Sigrid Thornton, and Tom Burlinson.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Jan. 29 at 2 and Jan. 30 at 2 and 4:30: Three different programs in a series called "Our Secret Century: Revelations from the Prelinger Archives, a Retrospective of Advertising, Industrial, and Educational Films."

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"From Kern to Sondheim: American Musical Theatre on Television." Through Feb. 13: "Wonderful Town" (1958), with Rosalind Russell. Tuesdays through Sundays at 2:30 and Thursdays at 6. . . . Through Feb. 13: "West Side Story" (1985), with Kiri Te Kanawa and José Carreras. Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 4:30. . . . Jan. 28 at 6: "Bob Fosse: Steam Heat" (1990), a documentary. . . . ¶ The documentary films of Frederick Wiseman. Jan. 27 at 5:30 and Jan. 29 at 2: "Sinai Field Mission" (1978). . . . Jan. 28 at 6 and Jan. 30 at 2: "The Store" (1983).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 26 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Entre Nous" (1983, Diane Kurys; in French), with Isabelle Huppert, Miou-Miou, Guy Marchand, and Jean-Pierre Bacri.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film." Jan. 28 at 6:30: "Bedtime Eyes" (1987, Tatsumi Kumashiro; in Japanese), with Kanako Higuchi, Michael Wright, and Eiji Okada. . . . ¶ Jan. 29 at 1: "The Sea and Poison" (1986, Kei Kumai; in Japanese), with Okada and Ken Watanabe.

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of African-American independent films. Jan. 29 at 2: "Harvest 3000 Years" (1976, Haile Gerima). . . . ¶ Jan. 30 at noon and 3: "To Sleep with Anger" (1990, Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover.

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Bad Girls—Amos Kollek directed and stars in this drama about a writer who moves to Hell's Kitchen to research a book on prostitutes. Opening January 28.

Blink—Michael Apted's new film is a thriller about a blind musician who may have witnessed a murder after having her sight restored. With Madeleine Stowe, Aidan Quinn, James Remar, and Laurie Metcalf. Opening January 26.

Car 54, Where Are You?—John C. McGinley is Muldoon and David Johansen is Toody in this takeoff on the early-sixties police sitcom. Directed by Bill Fishman. Opening January 28.

Golden Gate—Matt Dillon as an F.B.I. agent in San Francisco who sends a Chinatown businessman to prison during the McCarthy era and later falls in love with the man's daughter. With Joan Chen, Bruno Kirby, and Tzi Ma. Written by David Henry Hwang and directed by John Madden. Opening January 28.

Living Proof: HIV and the Pursuit of Happiness—A documentary about living with AIDS. Directed by Kermit Cole. Opening January 28.

The Scent of Green Papaya—Tran Anh Hung's story of a Vietnamese maid in nineteen-fifties Saigon. In Vietnamese. Opening January 28.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Blue—After "The Double Life of Véronique," the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski has come up with another lovely and perplexing film. Julie (Juliette Binoche) loses her husband and daughter in a car accident and sees that loss as a chance to break free. She moves to Paris, sheds a lover, and takes an apartment, but at every turn the past catches up. Her memories tend to rush back in with a burst of music (the husband was a composer); at times, the movie is more like a sound-and-light show than a drama. It could easily have been too grand and mournful for its own good, but it's lightened, against all expectation, by a glancing comedy. Binoche gives her most responsive performance to date. In French.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93.) (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Dangerous Woman—As Martha, the dim-witted, shortsighted heroine of Stephen Gyllenhaal's picture, Debra Winger pulls out all the stops, but you can't help wishing she'd push a few back in. The cunning intensity of her playing is almost embarrassing, and it certainly lacks support; the rest of the movie drags sullenly behind, and the other characters harden into stereotypes, Gabriel Byrne's blue-eyed drinker being the worst offender. You keep waiting for the film to explode, as Martha's stubborn ways pull her toward disaster, but it stays marshy and joyless. Only David Strathairn—miscast as a sleazeball, but still as watchable as ever—gets the action moving; he and Winger share one bloody and breathless scene that puts the rest of the movie to shame.—A.L. (12/13/93) (Festival.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. The real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. In Mandarin.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Grumpy Old Men—A sentimental comedy in the feuding-friends genre of "The Sunshine Boys," set in a wintry Minnesota village where the main pastime is ice fishing. The bickering next-door neighbors are a retired high-school history teacher (Jack Lemmon) and a retired TV repairman (Walter Matthau) who jockey for the attention of a flighty, voluptuous widow (Ann-Margret, as a former Berkeley prof!) who moves in across the street. Matthau and Lemmon have a few exuberant moments, but the laugh lines are quaint vulgarities and put-downs, and the triangle is hopelessly tricked up (Ann-Margret as a sexy-angelic lover of silly "mature" men is especially forced). Donald Petrie directed.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, and Columbus Circle.)

Heaven and Earth—A near-farcical end to Oliver Stone's trilogy on the Vietnam War. Hiep Thi Le plays Le Ly, a villager caught in events beyond her control, not the least of them a lousy script. Through a mixture of pious voice-over and random brutality, we get a potted history of Vietnamese suffering: the colonizing French, the creepy Vietcong, and then all those randy grunts. But the movie itself feels like the latest in a long line of insults; the startling lack of dramatic resonance, and the frailty of the central performance, tend to flatten rather than raise your interest. Help is on hand from Tommy Lee Jones, as a United States marine with a tender heart and a history of killing, who marries the heroine and takes her back home. He looms large in the film, but is eventually outplayed by Stone's manic style.—A.L. (1/17/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. The picture turns into a kind of stylized morality play about the right and the wrong ways for Irishmen to respond to distorted portraits of their character, and it's terrifically effective. Day-Lewis, Postlethwaite, and Don Baker (playing a chillingly self-possessed I.R.A. man) are superb. Also with Emma Thompson and Corin Redgrave.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Mrs. Doubtfire—Robin Williams impersonates a stocky, middle-aged female housekeeper, and he's too inventive an actor not to get a few gigantic laughs out of the stunt. But the picture as a whole isn't in the class of "Tootsie" and "Some Like It Hot," mostly because its premise is sentimental, not cynical: Williams's character, a divorced man, becomes Mrs. Doubtfire in order to get around a court-ordered custody arrangement and spend more time with his adorable children. Lessons are learned, loved ones are hugged, and personal growth is achieved—as usual, at the expense of comedy. Some, apparently including Williams, like it warm and cuddly, too. Nobody's perfect. Directed—with a very heavy hand—by Chris Columbus.—T.R. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

Naked—A pitch-black comedy, written and directed by Mike Leigh, in which the unstoppable Johnny (David Thewlis) comes to London and makes life difficult for everyone he meets: new girlfriends, old girlfriends, a drunken Scotsman on the street. The smell of misanthropy, which wafts from one Leigh picture to the next, hangs more heavily than ever in the air, and the movie is badly unbalanced by the presence of a token yuppie—not a character at all, just a lazy exercise in caricature. But Thewlis saves the day: the Johnny he creates is lean and hungry, foulmouthed but erudite, his low expectations crossed with high spirits. He's one of the most compelling rebels in modern cinema.—A.L. (1/17/94) (Angelika Film Center, 68th St. Playhouse, and Thalia.)

The Pelican Brief—The script is adapted from the novel by John Grisham, but not adapted enough. Two Supreme Court Justices are murdered, and Darby Shaw (Julia Roberts), a mere law student, decides that the trail leads all the way to the White House. She gets help from a journalist, played by Denzel Washington, who struggles manfully to keep her, and the movie, alive. (Only one of them survives.) The director is Alan J. Pakula, who shows his class in a couple of nervy murder sequences, but flounders through the rest of the story. Pale and overwrought, Julia Roberts looks worried that she may be in the wrong movie.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beach and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Shadowlands—Richard Attenborough's film chronicles the relationship between the British writer C. S. Lewis (played by Anthony Hopkins) and an American woman named Joy Davidman Gresham (Debra Winger). The screenplay, by William Nicholson (adapted from his earlier television and stage versions of the story), initially emphasizes the comic incongruity of the love affair: Lewis, a shy and scholarly bachelor in his fifties, suddenly falls hard for a blunt, outspoken woman who doesn't quite fit the profile of an Oxford professor's wife. But the real drama is in the poignant brevity of the relationship, which is cut short by Joy's death from cancer. The picture isn't actually very good; it's just a tearjerker with clumsy interpolations of theology. (Lewis, a prominent Christian thinker, is shown delivering lectures on the spiritual implications of happiness and pain.) Hopkins and Winger are fascinating to watch, though. Winger—who is, as always, vivid, honest, and intuitive—gives the whole idea of Americanness an astonishing radiance. And Hopkins, realizing that he has to put up some real emotional capital or else get blown off the screen, comes through with the most impassioned acting of his career.—T.R. (Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

Six Degrees of Separation—Fred Schepisi's film of John Guare's brilliant play about affluent, liberal-seeming New Yorkers who are conned by a young, gay black man claiming to be the son of Sidney Poitier. It's as agile and as inventive a visualization of complex theatrical material as you'll ever see. Guare's script (which sticks close to the text of the play) is a virtuoso comedy of upper-middle-class Manhattan manners, and the writing is amazingly nimble and unpredictable. His subject is the possibility, and the necessity, of seeing the world through someone else's eyes. The odd empathy that develops between the privileged heroine, Ouisa (Stockard Channing), and the young hustler (Will Smith) is moving because it emerges, unexpectedly, out of their radically different—but equally ingenious—strategies for manipulating experience. Their cleverness, like Guare's, ultimately transcends itself. Schepisi's direction keeps the movie charging forward, driven by its locomotive wit, until near the end, when we find ourselves set down in a huge and thrillingly unfamiliar emotional landscape, hardly knowing how we got there. It's a wonderful ride. The terrific cast also includes Donald Sutherland, Mary Beth Hurt, Bruce Davison, and Anthony Michael Hall.—T.R. (Coronet, and Waverly.)

The Snapper—A return trip to the Dublin of "The Commitments," and every bit as welcome as the earlier film. The Curley family is in trouble: young Sharon (Tina Kellegher) is going to have a snapper—a baby, that is, conceived after a drunken fumble on a car hood. Sharon knows who the father is, but she won't let on to her friends, let alone to her father (Colm Meaney). It sounds like a drab little tale, but in the hands of director Stephen Frears it becomes a headlong tumble into good humor; he seems as fascinated by his characters as the family is by the new arrival, and the camera scuttles around, tolerantly picking up details. The script is adapted by Roddy Doyle from his own novel, which guarantees a string of firecracker jokes, caustic but never cruel; look out for the bemused parents discovering the joy of sex.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Tombstone—In this gaudy, ramshackle piece of Western legendry, the Earp brothers—Wyatt (Kurt Russell), Virgil (Sam Elliott), and Morgan (Bill Paxton)—team up with Wyatt's pal Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) to war against an outlaw mob dubbed the Cowboys. (The bad guys wear red sashes.) Before Tombstone is tamed, the film becomes a cavalcade of killing. Playing a hedonist who keeps his ironic distance until the bullets fly gives Kilmer an edge on the rest of the cast; drawling between coughs and oscillating like a sine wave, he radiates a virtuoso superciliousness. And Russell's stalwart Wyatt anchors the action even when it becomes impossibly operatic. But the narrative incoherence undercuts whatever pleasure the audience might find in the heroes' outsize gestures and humorous flourishes. Characters take abrupt ninety-degree turns, or pop up out of nowhere, or simply disappear. While many of the incidents in Kevin Jarre's script recall the 1967 Earp movie, "The Hour of the Gun," the style is closer to other films by George P. Cosmatos, the director who gave us "Rambo" and "Cobra." The enormous cast includes Dana Delany as Wyatt's gal, Joanna Pacula as Doc's, and Powers Boothe, Michael Biehn, and Stephen Lang as the most garish villains.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Cinema II, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through Jan. 27.)

REVIVALS

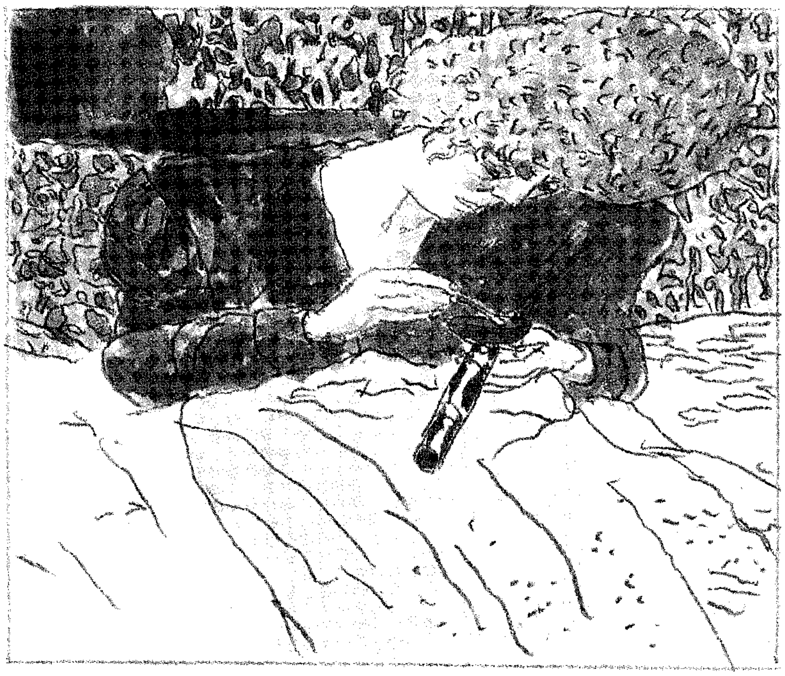
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael.)

Cries and Whispers (1972)—Ingmar Bergman's dream play is set in a manor house at the turn of the century where a spinster in her late thirties (Harriet Andersson) is dying. Her two sisters (Ingrid Thulin and Liv Ullmann) have come to attend her, and they watch and wait, along with a peasant servant (Kari Sylwan). The movie is built out of a series of emotionally charged images that express inner stress, and Bergman handles them with the fluidity of a master. Superbly photographed by Sven Nykvist in a style suggesting Edvard Munch, and with blood-red backgrounds, the film is smooth and hypnotic; it has oracular power and the pull of a dream. Yet there's a nineteenth-century dullness at the heart of it. Each sister represents a different aspect of woman—woman viewed as the Other—and the film mingles didacticism with erotic mystery. In Swedish.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 31.)

Desire (1936)—Marlene Dietrich, with her pencil-line arched eyebrows, as the most elegantly amusing international jewel thief ever. She steals a pearl necklace in Paris and speeds toward Spain; on her way she has a series of encounters with Gary Cooper, a motor engineer from Detroit who is on holiday. Directed by Frank Borzage, this is a polished light comedy in the "Continental" style—a sophisticated romantic trifle, with Dietrich more chic and modern than in her von Sternberg pictures. When she eyes Cooper, she's so captivating you almost feel sorry for him; there's a moment when she's standing against French doors when she's simply peerlessly sexy. But you can also see why this European sophisticate longs for the American innocent. Cooper is a bit coy and rambunctious in his Americanness, but wearing narrow-tailored suits and with his hair sleek he's the ideal Art Deco hero. When he's being threatened by her crooked associate (John Halliday), who remarks, tauntingly, "One mustn't underestimate America—it's a big country," Cooper bends forward and says, "Six foot three."—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 26.)

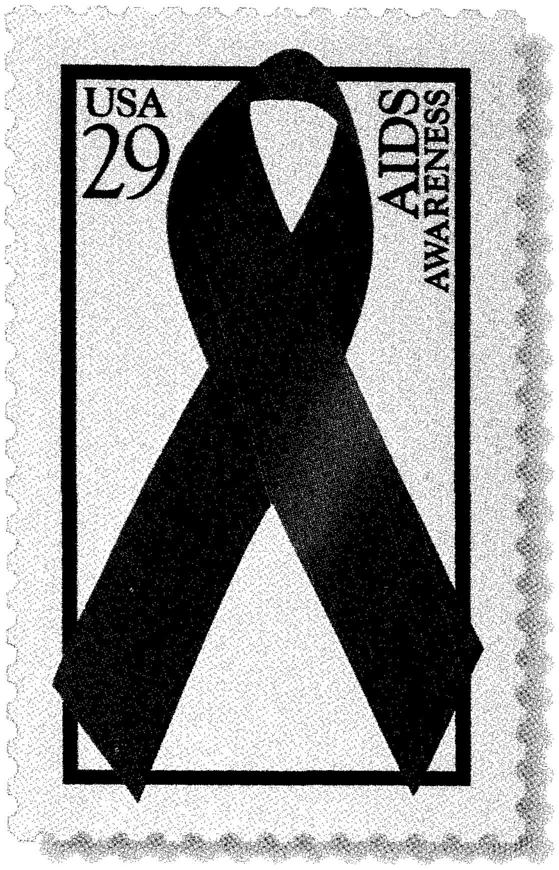
I Confess (1953)—A priest with a past (Montgomery Clift) caught in a trap; either he must betray the secrets of a murderer's confession or he himself will be convicted of the murder. The premise of this Hitchcock thriller is promising, but the movie, set in Québec and partly shot there, is so reticent it's mostly dull. Clift seems determined not to move more that the tiniest facial muscles. With a miscast Anne Baxter, and Brian Aherne, O. E. Hasse, Karl Malden, and Dolly Haas.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 28-29.)

McCabe & Mrs. Miller (1971)—A beautiful pipe dream of a movie: Robert Altman's fleeting vision of what frontier life might have been, with Warren Beatty as a cocky small-time gambler and Julie Christie as an ambitious madam in the turn-of-the-century Northwest. Delicate, richly textured, and unusually understated, this modern classic is not like any other film. Altman builds a Western town as one might build a castle in the air—and it's inhabited. His stock company of actors turn up quietly in the new location, as if they were part of a floating crap game, and he creates an atmosphere of living interrelationships. With Keith Carradine, Shelley Duvall, René Auberjonois, John Schuck, Bert Remsen, Michael Murphy, and Anthony Holland.—P.K. (Film Forum 2.)



MARVIN FRIEDMAN

At Film Forum 2, Julie Christie in "McCabe & Mrs. Miller."



For more information about HIV/AIDS, call the
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or write to the American Association for World Health,
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UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE™

THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE 6.6 AT 4:31

THE unhappiest person in the lobby of the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel before dawn last Monday was a slight, sandy-haired man who had gone to bed Sunday night wearing bright-pink wide-legged pajamas. Who knew on Sunday that their sleepwear choices were going to be on public display before the night was through? Only a few minutes passed between the bang of the temblor and the hotel management's herding of all its guests out of their creaking, quaking rooms, down the seldom used stairs, and into the elegant marble lobby. In those minutes after you were bounced out of bed by the vibrations, you had a few random, hysterical thoughts, you wondered whether you should take your room key, you fluffed up your hair, you threw on some things if you were sleeping without things, and you ran.

The evacuation outfit of choice at the Beverly Wilshire appeared to be the hotel's plush white terry-cloth bathrobe, and slippers. So many of the guests chose this ensemble that the lobby could have been a country-club steam bath or the color room of a hair salon. Nylon warmup suits were also popular—and they were an appropriate choice, because in the hours following the quake, guests alternated between cooling down in the lobby and, with each aftershock, wind-sprinting out of the building and across three eastbound lanes of Wilshire Boulevard to the median strip. Even at 5 A.M. or so, the traffic on Wilshire was pretty heavy. The cars were filled with people who were fully dressed and were driving somewhere (*where*?) in the early morning of a national holiday during a natural disaster. They looked weird, and those of us on the median probably looked a little weird, too.

A few of the guests seemed as if they had dressed for something other than disaster. Carl Portale, the publisher of *Harper's Bazaar*, was wearing a sort of yachting outfit—crisp trousers and a sporty crewneck sweater. One woman did the median dash in a skintight black micro mini, sheer hose, high heels, foundation, blusher, mascara, eyeliner, lip liner, lipstick, and pearls. Pelé, the soccer star, was wearing jeans and a baseball jacket, and between sprints he signed autographs and discussed the World Cup. As dawn approached, the air was clammy, and the sidewalk glittered with pieces of a big glass window that had shattered and fallen from the old Drexel Burnham Lambert offices, just down the street. The man in the pink pajamas missed all of it. He remained huddled in a far corner of the lobby, alone, his legs crossed to cover up as much of the pajamas as they could.

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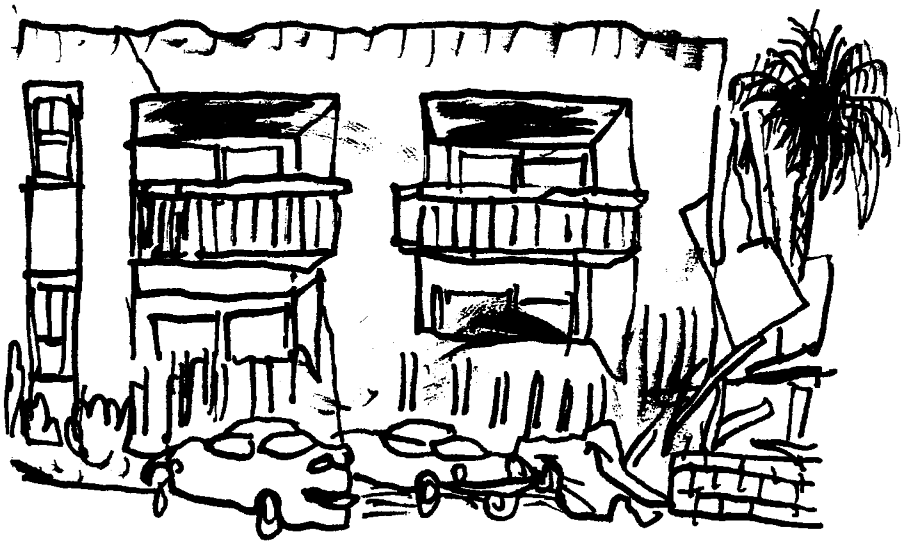
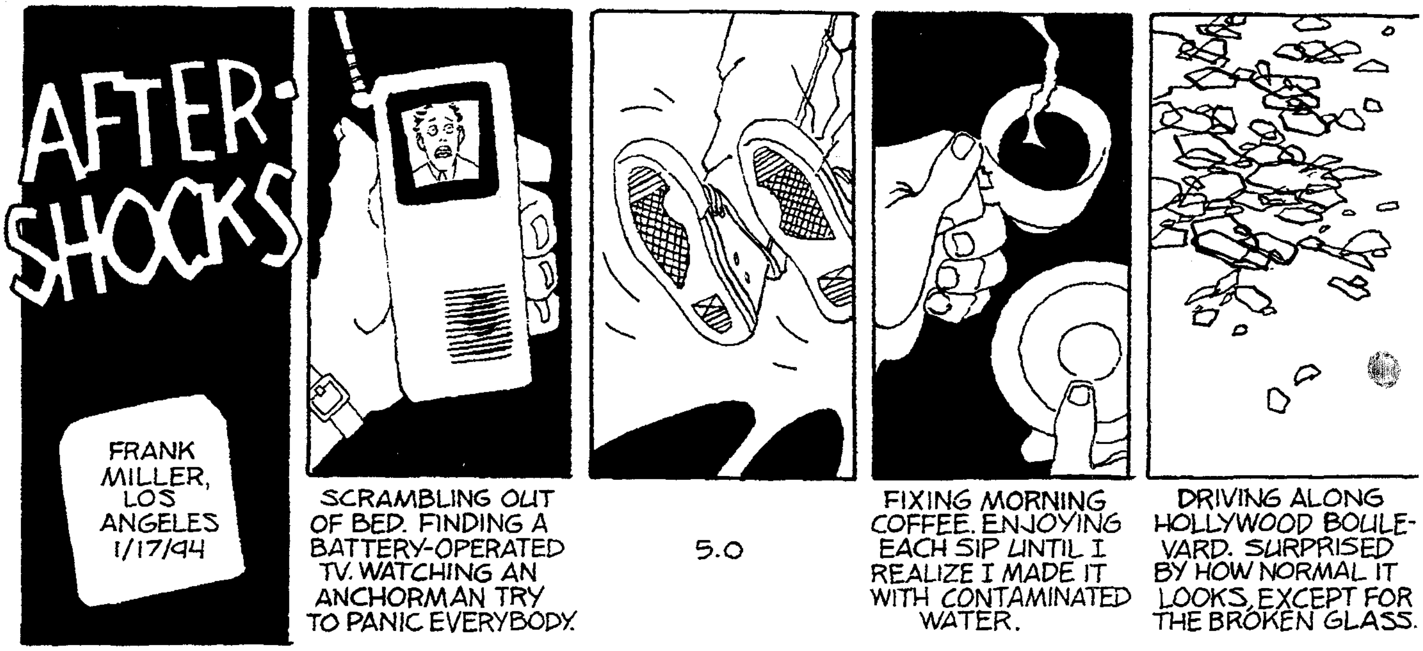
WHEN Kate Hutton was jolted awake last Monday morning, she dressed hurriedly, saw to the dog, and within twenty minutes was at the media-and-operations center of the Seismological Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology, in Pasadena. She checked to make sure that the center's seismic data were coming in and that the computers were crunching the numbers. From the data, she quickly determined that the earthquake had struck with a magnitude of at least 6.5 on the Richter scale. Then she began thinking about what to tell the print and television reporters who had immediately begun descending on the center, as they do whenever a quake occurs.

The center, which is housed in the Seeley G. Mudd Building of Geophysics and Planetary Science at Caltech, has



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY PANTER


AFTER-SHOCKS
FRANK MILLER, LOS ANGELES 1/17/94
SCRAMBLING OUT OF BED. FINDING A BATTERY-OPERATED TV. WATCHING AN ANCHORMAN TRY TO PANIC EVERYBODY.
5.0
FIXING MORNING COFFEE. ENJOYING EACH SIP UNTIL I REALIZE I MADE IT WITH CONTAMINATED WATER.
DRIVING ALONG HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD. SURPRISED BY HOW NORMAL IT LOOKS, EXCEPT FOR THE BROKEN GLASS.

learned to be ready for them. Outside, just beyond the laboratory entrance, a gray rectangular metal box is permanently installed on a sandstone-colored retaining wall facing the street. The box holds ten horizontal rows of cable plugs and, next to them, a list of who plugs into which row: “KCBS, KNBC, CNN,” and so on. By 6 A.M. on Monday, there were cables running from the box to numerous TV relay trucks, whose antennas, capped with dishes, rose as high as fifty feet into the air. Inside the center, the first of many regular briefings to be held for the media was already under way, in a small room crowded with cameras and reporters. On one wall of the room, five banks of seismograph drums recorded squiggles of seismic activity from different parts of the region on rolling sheets of paper.

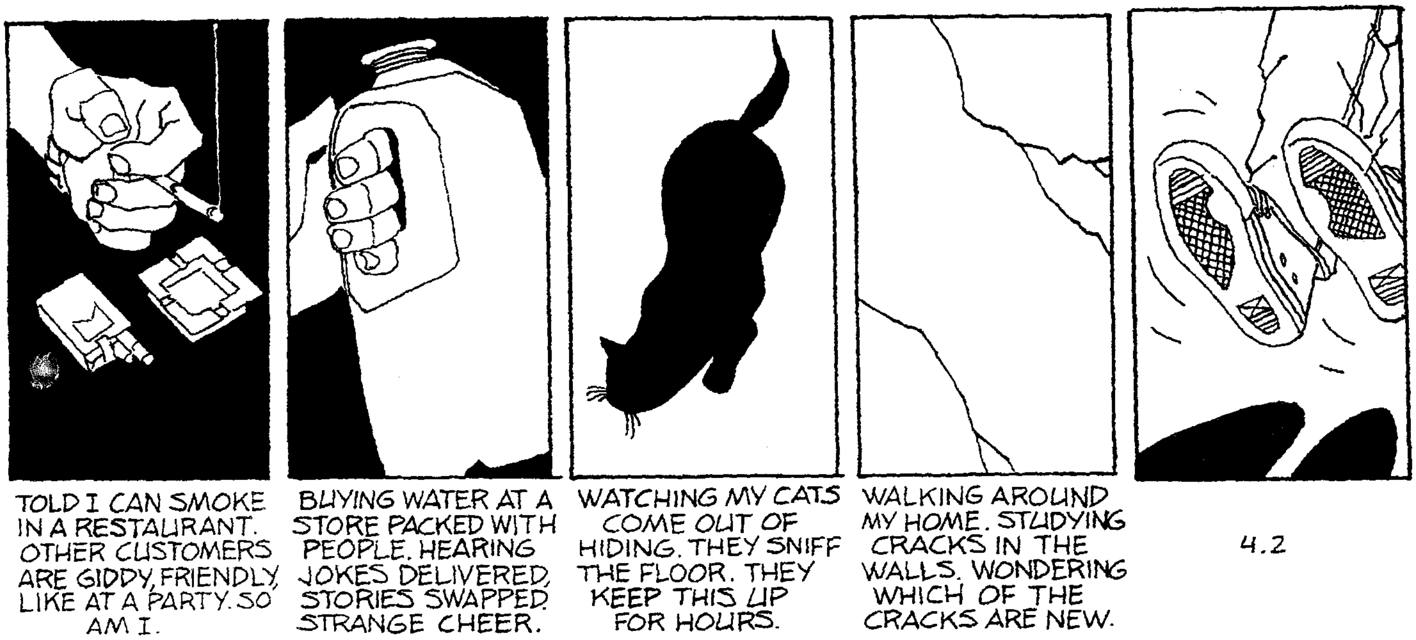
Kate Hutton is one of ten or so earth scientists in Southern California—some affiliated with universities, others with the United States Geological Survey—who brief the press when a major quake occurs. Another member of this group is Lucile M. Jones, a seismologist with the Survey who earned a degree of celebrity during the aftermath of a quake in June, 1992, when she talked to the cameras while comforting her five-year-old son. Hutton and Jones—who are known in Southern California as the Earthquake Ladies—tend to dress casually, in jeans and sweaters, and, like the other briefers, give the impression of having been out in the field, in touch with the earth and modest before its complexities.

When we visited the center on the day after the quake, Kerry Sieh, a geologist on the Caltech faculty who has had a lot of experience in responding to the press, was trying to explain to reporters that the scientists were still uncertain about just which fault blew; there is a filigree of faults in the Northridge area. “Such fine structure is not unusual,” he said. “Unfortunately, our confusion about it isn’t unusual either.”

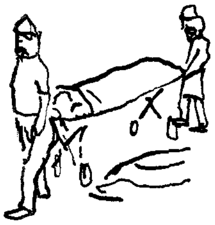
Hutton was at the center, too, and talked to us about her work. She has been in the briefing business for seventeen years, she said, and went on to note that the questions she tends to get from reporters today are no longer along the lines of: Is Los Angeles going to fall into the ocean? They now want to know things like: What fault is it on? It occurred to us to wonder why people craved information about an upheaval of the earth that had already occurred and that nobody could do anything about, and when we put the question to Hutton she explained, “If you can name something you fear, it gives you a sense of control over it.”

What undergirds the ability of the center’s scientists to speak promptly and with authority is that a technological revolution has taken place in seismic-data gathering and processing. As recently as the nineteen-seventies, seismologists analyzed earthquakes manually, with seismograph traces and rulers. Now three hundred and twenty seismic sensors are buried in the ground at two hundred and fifty different sites around the Los Angeles region, and these sensors feed data about earth movements into a computer at the center. Philip Maechling, a computer programmer, instructed us that when a hundred and seventy-five of the sensors register “earth movements” at roughly the same time, the computer concludes that a significant quake (or an aftershock) is occurring. As we stood talking to Maechling, a small speaker next to his monitor reported the computer’s deduction that an aftershock was occurring right then, though we didn’t feel it: a programmed voice droned, “Warning, a significant event is in progress.” Maechling said, “The computers tell us there’s an earthquake, but we look at the seismograph drums to make sure the computers are telling the truth.”

A number of the questions posed by the press that day concerned earthquake prediction, a subject that, not surprisingly, often comes up on these occasions. Andrea Donnellan, another of the scientists who assist in the briefings, patiently sought to make it clear to reporters that earthquake predic-


TOLD I CAN SMOKE IN A RESTAURANT. OTHER CUSTOMERS ARE GIDDY, FRIENDLY, LIKE AT A PARTY. SO AM I.
BUYING WATER AT A STORE PACKED WITH PEOPLE. HEARING JOKES DELIVERED, STORIES SWAPPED. STRANGE CHEER.
WATCHING MY CATS COME OUT OF HIDING. THEY SNIFF THE FLOOR. THEY KEEP THIS UP FOR HOURS.
WALKING AROUND MY HOME. STUDYING CRACKS IN THE WALLS. WONDERING WHICH OF THE CRACKS ARE NEW.
4.2

tion is in its infancy. The questions on prediction persisted, however, turning to whether there might have been a linkage between several small disturbances in Santa Monica the week before and the big Northridge upheaval. Hutton said that no one knows, and added, "We try to make statements that have a high probability of being true."



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THE Walt Disney Concert Hall survived last week's quake just fine, though almost all the little people in the audience at the theatre-in-the-roundish hall had toppled out of their rows of chairs and onto the stage below, where they lay crumpled in a pile. On Tuesday afternoon, the architect Frank Gehry was showing us around his Santa Monica studio—assaying the damage—and we'd taken a slight detour to peer into a mammoth one-tenth scale model of the concert hall, the major component of the Disney building, one of Gehry's latest creations. (The real thing is currently under construction adjacent to L.A.'s downtown Music Center.) The model was built for the purpose of acoustic testing (it can be wired up with minute sensors, sealed tight, filled with nitrogen, and then bathed in sound at one-tenth volume), but this afternoon it was affording one more test of our nerves. Of course, the model wasn't anchored securely to the ground the way the real building will be. Still, the vision of all that chaos reminded us once again how lucky everyone had been that the quake had occurred early in the morning, and not, say, in mid-concert.

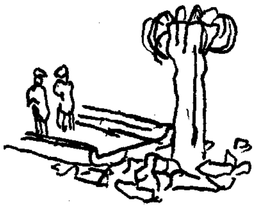
We'd headed over to Gehry's studio in the vague expectation that if anyone could provide us with a measure of solace—or, at least, some wry perspective—it would be he. Many of his most celebrated buildings—including his own home, in Santa Monica—are famous for looking as if they'd been hit by a conceptual earthquake before any actual one could occur. Gehry's is an aesthetic of juts and jumbles; he seldom shows any particular allegiance to the perpendicular; and he cherishes the very sorts of raw materials—chain-link fencing, exposed pipes and conduits, sheet metal, unfinished plywood—that had risen up in such profusion all around town since the quake. "Maybe God just likes what I'm doing," Gehry said, acknowledging the premise while flipping it over. "Clearly, he's been cribbing my act."

Gehry has often been quoted to the effect that his is a kind of sensibility that can easily find inspiration in a pile of rubbish—the chance alignments, the negative spaces, the disorderly order. He told us, in passing, how he used to gaze into trash bins, almost reflexively, just to vacuum the stray configurations he saw there into his sensorium. L.A., then, must surely be providing him with a veritable windfall. His own studio, though nowhere nearly as badly hit as many nearby buildings, did contain many tidy piles of rubble and shattered glass. And several long fluorescent-light banks above the studio's hangarlike design spaces had buckled as awesomely as anything on I-10.

But Gehry was taking no delight in the chaos—not even any satisfaction from it. If anything, he seemed jangled and disoriented by his experiences in the last couple of days. His countenance was glum, his complexion pale. (His is a gentle face, comprising some of the same soft, sloping forms that have begun to insinuate themselves into his most recent creations.) His fingers trembled as he showed us around, tentatively touching the models of several recent projects: a deliciously loopy office building for the Prague riverfront, an ambitious proposal for consolidating East Berlin's principal museums, a spectacular Cleveland residence. "If that one wasn't the Big One," he remarked abstractedly at one point, "if that was only a 6.6 and they keep telling us that an 8.3 is inevitably on the way—well, then you have to begin to ask yourself whether we aren't all in the position of the Jews in Germany just after Hitler took power. I mean, isn't it time for all of us to start thinking about leaving?"

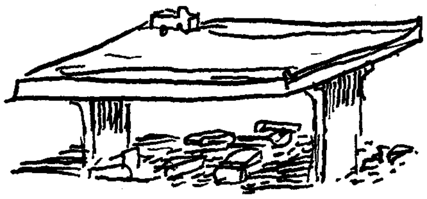
Gehry was born in Toronto. (He's a fanatical ice-hockey aficionado.) He arrived in California at age seventeen and, thanks to the very fact of his transplantation, has always seemed a consummate Californian. His sudden doubts were startling. Perhaps they arose from his own experience of the quake. He'd awakened, at home, to the shaking, with one hand already gashed and bloody—he never quite figured out how. Except for his chimney, which toppled, his magnificently jumbly house had survived the quake unscathed. But the immediately ensuing silence had spooked him: he was terrified that something had befallen his fourteen-year-old son in a downstairs bedroom—though it turned out that the boy had simply dived for cover under his sheets and then refused for some minutes to emerge. Or maybe Gehry's doubts had deeper roots. Gehry will be turning sixty-five next month, and the day before the earthquake, he, along with almost all the other architects in L.A., had attended a memorial service for his esteemed contemporary Charles Moore, who'd died suddenly of a heart attack, at age sixty-eight, in December.

We asked Gehry whether the critics had been right in seeing California's seismic unsteadiness as a source of his own aesthetic. "Yeah, people often say that, but that interpretation was always pretty glib," he replied. "No, rather it's modern life, the real experience of living in this world, that's fuelled my work. I mean, I don't think it's possible any longer to create a contemplative space on the urban scale. The real world today comes hurtling at you like a runaway truck—that's what I'm trying to deal with—and either you can freeze up and let it run you down or else you can jump to the side, take a flying leap, clamber on board, and struggle your way through the window and into the driver's seat, where you can try to wrest control of the steering wheel and the brakes. That's the energy I try to harness in my work. I guess you can say I'm intrigued by the sense of movement."



Sounded to us as if he'd been describing an earthquake.

"Well, no." He smiled wanly. "The other—I mean urban life—for all its chaos, is slower, and you have time to intellectualize it. A quake is instantaneous, more life-threatening at the point of fusion. It's like a plane crash. In fact, I'm supposed to take a plane this Thursday, and the prospect suddenly has me a bit panicked." The building shuddered: a relatively mild aftershock. "Though so does the prospect of staying here."



* * *

Each time a major earthquake shakes Southern California, certain jittery, expect-the-worst, if-it-happens-it's-to-me New Yorkers—that is to say, lots of people—telephone the city government with anxious questions about tremors that might possibly, could certainly, or will inevitably begin soon or soon enough or someday in one or all of the five boroughs. These calls move along a line of rocky phone transfers which finally ends in the offices of the city's Subsurface Exploration Section, a division of the city's Department of General Services more commonly referred to as "the underground department," which, it turns out, has its offices up near the top of the Municipal Building, on the twenty-second floor. There the chief of the underground department, Larry Ebbitt, and the deputy chief, Mike Greenman, respond in level tones to those moved to call, tending to note that, while New York is categorized, with regard to earthquake susceptibility, as a Zone 2 site—neither the most placid nor the most nerve-racking of three possible classifications—at the moment they have no readings that would warrant anyone's running for a doorframe to stand under.

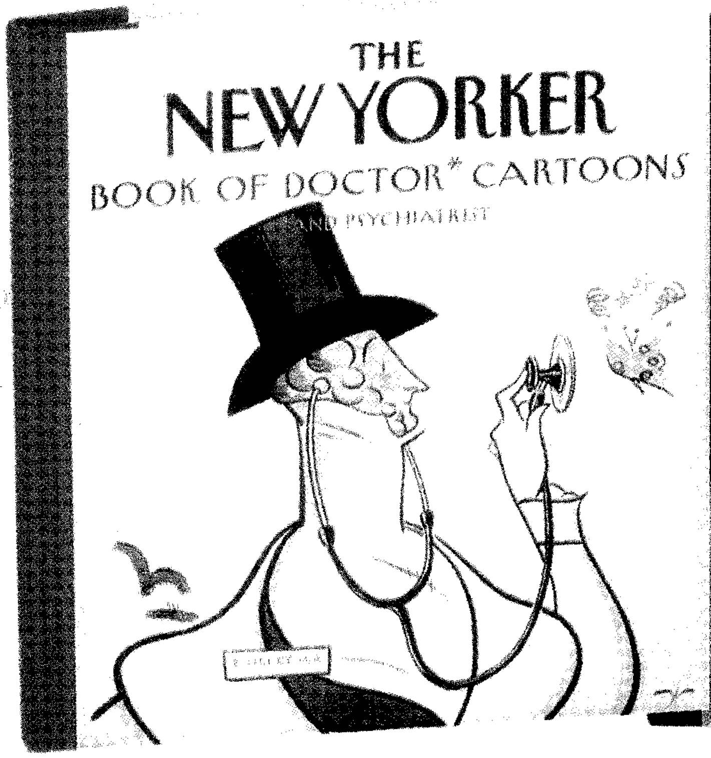
"The thing is the hysteria involved," Mr. Ebbitt said the other day, seated at his underground desk.

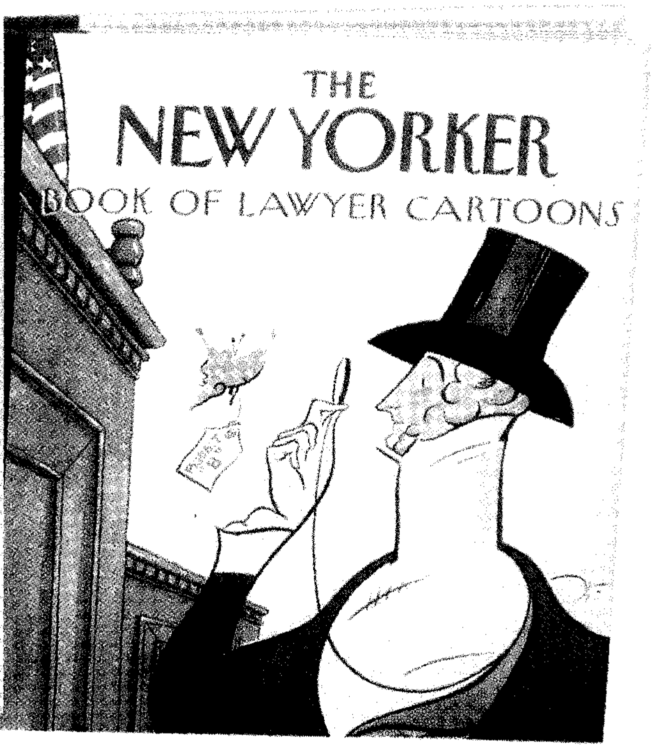
"We don't play up the gloom and doom," Mr. Greenman said, leaning back in his underground chair.

Most days at the underground department, somebody is heading out to bore a hole someplace in the city. The borings yield samples of soil and rock, and these samples yield information about the safety of building an apartment house here or running a sewer line through there. Since its establishment, in 1938, exactly fifty-four years after a magnitude-5 quake loosened the bricks of countless Manhattan chimneys, the underground department has collected more than two million linear feet of borings. The department also has made, and carefully maintains, more than six thousand drawings of the borings and of where they were taken—visual records of that part of the earth's outermost crust which happens to have New York on top of it. Thanks, in part, to the department's samples and drawings, Mr. Ebbitt and Mr. Greenman know of most of the probable earthquake faults running through the city: the one along Dyckman Street in upper Manhattan, for example, and the one hundreds of feet beneath Chambers Street, practically below the underground chairs and desks they occupy.

"The joke around here is that when you see Mike and me running you know the earthquake is coming," Mr. Ebbitt remarked.

Mr. Greenman, on being asked about recent quakes here, first brought up one he himself had felt, in 1985—one severe enough to disconnect a police pier in the East River from its moorings in Brooklyn, which is where Mr. Greenman lives. Then he told a story about another quake he had experienced, this one in 1988. "I was at home, and my kid, he was at the sink with a glass in his hand, and all of a sudden the glass just cracked, and the very next second there was an earthquake," he said. "Now, I have no scientific data to back that up, or anything, but it's kind of eerie, don't you think?" ♦





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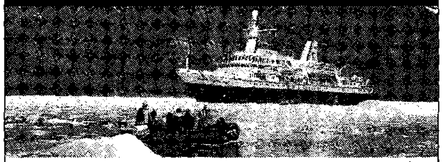

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ANNALS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

KIM'S RANSOM

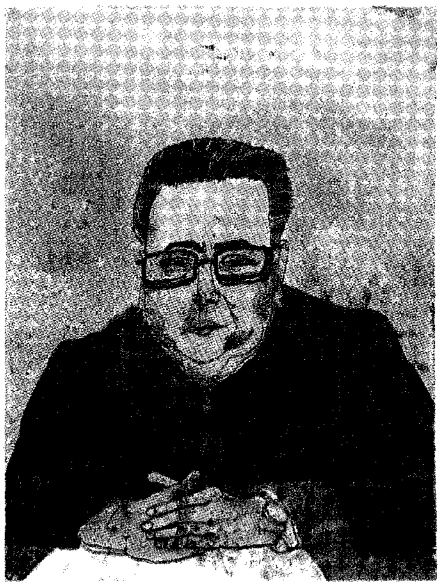
Kim Il Sung has already exhausted North Korea in his drive to make the world take him seriously. His latest ploy is a nuclear threat.

BY MICHAEL SHAPIRO

KIM IL SUNG, the North Korean dictator—redeemer to his people, and madman with a bomb to almost everyone else—sits in isolation in his capital, Pyongyang, letting the world guess what he is thinking. He is eighty-one years old and affects the trappings of semiretirement. He wears panama hats and color-coördinated outfits. He hunts wild boar from a safe distance, with rifles fitted with telescopic sights. He is said to have relinquished the everyday affairs of state to his son and heir, Kim Jong Il, who is fifty-one. All that is missing is a photograph with grandchildren. He is believed to have at least two.

The affectation is deceptive. Forty-eight years after Stalin set Kim Il Sung on his throne, he remains an object of fear, and perhaps never more so than now. This is a considerable achievement for a ruler whose economy is believed to be in such ruin that his people are encouraged to eat just two meals a day. Kim Il Sung inspires fear not only because he may possess one or two nuclear weapons but also because he has made the world believe he would not hesitate to use them. Through the fall and winter, the United States has been trying to get North Korea to allow inspections of seven sites where bombs may be being made. Negotiators have trod warily, first hinting at confrontation and then backing off, the better not to provoke him.

A deal may be near—one in which the North Koreans will allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to visit those seven sites but not two additional sites where inspectors suspect they might find evidence of bomb production. Satellite surveillance has its limits; the I.A.E.A. is demanding on-site inspections. The North Koreans, in return for complying with terms that they had in fact agreed to in 1985, will win the suspension of the United States–South Korea war games known as Team Spirit, which usually begin in late winter. And, more important, the North Koreans will force the Americans, whom they blame and despise for splitting Korea at the end of the Second World War, to negotiate the future of diplomatic relations between North Korea and the United States directly, and not in tandem with the South Koreans, whom the North Koreans dismiss as American puppets.



It has been tempting to see Kim only in terms of his bombast and the vulgarity of his cult. But to do that is to underestimate his cunning.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

But those who have watched Kim Il Sung over the years don't expect the crisis to end here. This confrontation with the West, they feel, is just the beginning. There is a growing suspicion that after the North Koreans agree to inspections they will contrive to make the visits difficult, if not impossible. The North Koreans are considered capable of reversing themselves once the inspectors arrive, perhaps barring entry to some of the sites, or maintaining that they never agreed to inspections at the very places specified in the agreement. Kim Il Sung has been waiting a long time for the moment when his powerful enemies—the Americans, in particular—are compelled to accept him as the leader of a nation that matters.

For decades, Kim Il Sung endured as a journalistic chestnut: the lunatic who presided over the world's most bizarre and longest-lasting cult of personality. North Korea was an Orwellian nightmare—a source of stories of a robotic people wearing Kim Il Sung pins, chanting his name, holding up colored placards to generate his likeness along the length of Kim Il Sung Stadium, and extolling the manifold accomplishments of the Great Leader and his son, the Dear Leader. Then the North Koreans would hold the crew of a captured American spy ship for eleven months, as they did after seizing the U.S.S. Pueblo, in 1968; or blow up half the South Korean Cabinet, as they did in 1983, in Rangoon; or blow up a South Korean airliner, as they did in 1987. For a while, at least, the eye-rolling would stop, and people in Washington, Seoul, Tokyo, and every other capital who felt themselves threatened by the angry whims of Kim Il Sung would once again try to determine just who it was they were dealing with.

The task was not easy. Although North Korea has diplomatic relations with more than a hundred countries, it has effectively cut itself off from most of the world. Visitors find their tours and their access tightly limited and closely monitored. Diplomats who have spent years in Pyongyang tell of never visiting a North Korean home, or even having a candid conversation with a North Korean. The word that recurs when they speak of that posting is "irrational." I have never met Kim Il Sung. Though I have been to South Korea many times, I have never been granted permission to visit the North. American journalists visit North Korea on rare occasions; usually, the visit is arranged for a group and coincides with a showcase event, like Kim Il Sung's birthday. He almost never grants these visitors an interview. He spoke with the *Times* and the Washington *Post* for the first, and last, time in 1972.

It has been tempting, then, to see Kim Il Sung only in terms of threatening bombast, the vulgarity of his cult, the monuments he has ordered built to preserve his likeness for eternity. But to do that is to underestimate his cunning. Kim Il Sung has always known what he wanted for himself and for the nation he created in his own image. He wanted the powerful countries to come to him, and to treat him and his small nation as an equal. And, because he has been willing to take his nation time and again to the brink of disaster, to risk war with South Korea and with the United States, he has made his enemies dread him. Now, to the world's discomfort and chagrin, he is on the verge of realizing his vainglorious dream.

KIM IL SUNG grants occasional audiences to foreign visitors, and those visitors invariably come away declaring that their own preconceptions and the intelligence briefings they received before their trips could not have been further off the mark—that he is not, as they imagined, crazy; nor is he, as they were told, a doddering old man who is sure that events of thirty years ago happened yesterday and whose lunches end with rice dribbling down his chin.

They talk of "a country gentleman," "a firm handshake," "clear eyes," and "a man very much in charge." They like him. They like his company and they enjoy the splendid lunches that always follow their meetings. They are quick to show off official portraits taken with him in front of a painting of the sacred Mt. Paekdu which dominates the foyer of his office and residence, in a bland gray building on the outskirts of Pyongyang. The photographs are taken by the official photographer, who, they are certain, makes sure to capture Kim Il Sung with his hands clasped behind his back—the better, one plump and knowing guest has noted, to draw in his gut. Kim Il Sung is never photographed anymore from the right, because under his right ear is a growth half the size of a baseball.

Kim Il Sung carries himself like a man who has been in command for so long that he cannot recall a life when he was not. He walks heavily, leading with his chest and swinging his arms from the shoulders. He greets foreign visitors in the foyer of his office, and professes—just as his mentor, Stalin, used to do—that he does not take the adoration all around him seriously. After he has talked a lot about "independence," which is his way of saying "Leave us alone," visitors are likely to ask about the weapons he may or may not be developing, and he tells them the same thing he has said repeatedly in the past: Even if we could develop one or two nuclear weapons, the United States has thousands. And, besides, we cannot afford nuclear weapons. The visitors leave wondering, Why did he say one or two? Does that mean he *has* one or two?

"He was schmoozy," Representative Gary Ackerman, of New York, who saw him in October, says. "He said, 'I'm glad you came personally. I hope you have discovered that we have no horns. Some people think we're terrible. But we have no horns.' "

Kim Il Sung's retainers supply him with personal details about the lives of his visitors, so that he can appear to be truly interested in them, according to Ko Yong Hwan, a North Korean diplomat who defected in 1991. Ko, a slight and intense man, once served as a French interpreter for Kim Il Sung. He fled from his posting, in Zaire, just ahead of security agents who were coming to take him back to Pyongyang. He had spoken too freely about his dissatisfaction with the regime. Last December, sitting in Seoul, nervously locking his fingers or drawing imaginary boxes on the table, Ko spoke of his terror at his first meeting with Kim Il Sung. "My heart was pumping and my mouth was dry," he said. Fear was endemic in the court. "There was a dinner party where Kim Il Sung asked the Ambassador from Burkina Faso whether there was an irrigation system there. The Ambassador said yes. Kim Il Sung said, 'But I heard there is no water.' The Ambassador said, 'Yes, it's impossible.' Later, Kim Il Sung told the foreign minister, 'What a fool he is.' The foreign minister asked the Ambassador, 'Why did you say such a foolish thing?' The Ambassador said, 'I couldn't say anything right. I saw his face as big as a rock. His mouth looked like the barrel of a gun.' "

The fear of offending Kim Il Sung does not mean, however, that North Korea is a kingdom run by fiat. Kim does not just wake up in the morning, bark an order, and watch twenty-two million people salute and obey. North Korea has a powerful bureaucracy, which filters ideas, eliminating the ones it does not like—so say those who have negotiated with the North in the past. Kim Il Sung sits above the bureaucrats, issuing orders, and the orders are sometimes followed and sometimes forgotten. What matters to Kim is preserving his throne. This means playing different factions against one another, never allowing any one faction to gain substantial power. Kim Il Sung prefers to jail or exile his enemies, not kill them. He will send them to labor camps for years, and then bring them back when he decides to purge someone else.

His retainers recognize, however, that it is wise to humor him. His diplomats send lobster and caviar. His courtiers provide guests. They have brought him Billy Graham, who came to ask after the fate of North Korean Christians, and, in 1991, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, of the Unification Church, who was reported to have offered to invest in industry and tourism. Perhaps best of all, in 1974 they brought him a peer on a permanent basis, a fellow-ruler—the Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who had been deposed in 1970. In return for a forty-room palace beside a man-made lake, Sihanouk has given Kim Il Sung, in the view of one scholar, the rarest of pleasures—an equal to whom he could unburden himself without fear that his secrets would be betrayed.

The courtiers remind the guests to bring Kim Il Sung presents. The presents are stored in a special museum, where visitors are required to cover their shoes in plastic, the better not to sully the floor. When the South Korean clergyman Moon Ik Hwan, who died last week, came to visit, in 1989, he could not think of what to bring, and at the last minute he chose a new Korean dictionary. "He has everything," he said. "I couldn't find the right thing." Over the years, Vladimir Tolstikov, a former *Pravda* correspondent, has brought many gifts. Most recently, in 1988, he brought a classic blue-and-white porcelain clock. Kim Il Sung appeared to like the clock, Tolstikov says, but he likes hunting guns better.

When Kim Il Sung's guests leave, the look that returns to his face is one of profound loneliness, Ko Yong Hwan says. Many of Kim's oldest and most reliable friends are dead. Of course, he himself purged some of them. His first wife, Kim Jong Il's mother, who was at his side in the war against the Japanese, and whom he married in Russia, died in 1949, giving birth to a stillborn child. Two years earlier, their second son, Pyong Il, then aged three, drowned while playing near a pool in Pyongyang. Kim Il Sung also has a daughter from that marriage, but little is known about her. He has four children with his second wife, Kim Song Ae, and she, like his heir, lives in his reflected light.

Kim presides over a fractious court, where Kim Song Ae has jousted with Kim Jong Il, her stepson. Kim Jong Il so detests her that one visitor told me he had her face airbrushed out of their group photograph. Kim Song Ae has worked to boost the fortunes of her own elder son, and he has been rewarded with overseas postings. But the future of the state remains with Kim Jong Il, who is often photographed but whose voice is seldom heard. Remy Siahaan, who spent many years in the Indonesian Embassy in Pyongyang, says that when diplomats gathered they traded rumors about Kim Jong Il, whom they never saw. For a while, there was a story of his having been run over by a truck.

Kim Jong Il is believed to be responsible for the 1983 Rangoon bombing of the South Korean Cabinet members and for the 1987 bombing of the South Korean airliner, over the Andaman Sea. Short and pudgy, Kim Jong Il wears elevator shoes and combs his hair back in a modified pompadour. In one of his rare meetings with a foreign visitor, he introduced himself by saying, "I'm not a very handsome man, am I? I'm about the size of a dwarf." He possesses what may be the world's largest private movie collection—twenty thousand titles, of which "Friday the 13th" is a favorite. He likes movies so much that he arranged for the kidnapping of a South Korean director and his actress wife, in the hope of boosting the North Korean film industry. When foreign guests ask after him, Kim Il Sung tells them that his son is out among the people in the countryside, "where he is supposed to be." Or he says that because Kim Jong Il handles only domestic matters, and not international issues, there is no reason to talk with him. Sometimes when they ask after Kim Jong Il, he says his son will succeed him and then changes the subject.

Kim Jong Il tells his father's aides not to bring bad news—news about yet another poor harvest, or about reported food riots in the countryside, or about factories that operate only three hours a day because there is not enough oil to keep them going. But visitors sense that Kim Il Sung knows about such things, and in recent years his annual New Year's addresses to the people have been marked by admissions of "problems." This December 31st, Kim Il Sung called for a change in economic direction—away from heavy industry in favor of light industry; for exports to unspecified trading partners; and, in an unspoken concession to the end of cheap Russian oil, for an emphasis on coal production.

Signs of decay have become ever more apparent. The Pyongyang subway has vaulted ceilings and elegant chandeliers, but, according to visitors, the trains seem never to be running. The streets can feel empty, and when visitors ask where all the people are, their government minders offer vague explanations about "national holidays." The underground economy has grown to include trade in heirloom family porcelain along the Chinese border. "I think it must be agony for the old man," said Kongdan Oh, an analyst who studies North Korea for the Rand Corporation, who has developed a unique viewing post from reading and analysis of North Korean newspapers and periodicals. For a long time, Kongdan Oh says, Kim Il Sung's vision of the future worked. Even South Korean officials concede that until the mid-nineteen-seventies North Korea was a model of state-controlled development. Starting in 1953, with the end of the Korean War, and with Pyongyang so flattened by American carpet bombing that only an occasional chimney or smokestack broke the ruined landscape, Kim Il Sung built a nation that until the nineteen-seventies eclipsed its hated rival to the south. He emphasized heavy industry and collective farming. He could barter with his counterparts in the Soviet bloc. And he could push his people to work impossibly long hours. Kim toured the countryside, offering, his propagandists claim, "on-the-spot guidance" on everything from rice harvesting to iron smelting. Pyongyang, its skyline dominated by shapeless reinforced-concrete architecture, became his showcase.

Then things started going wrong. He

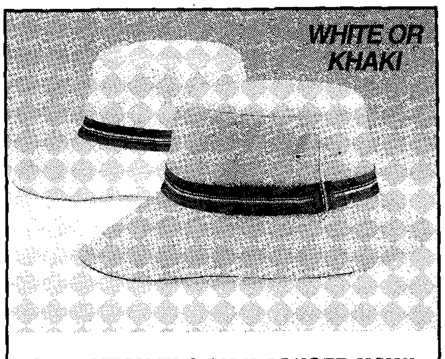
diverted more and more money to the military, until its share of the national budget reached some twenty-five per cent, compared with about four per cent in South Korea. Despite annual declarations of "bumper harvests," more often than not the harvests were poor. The nation no longer manufactured tractors and trucks that Moscow deemed worthy of purchase. Few of the expected spinoffs from the country's military technology materialized. Technocrats hoping to open the nation to foreign trade—in order to attract badly needed hard currency—clashed with hard-liners fearful of what an opening to the world might mean to the future of the state. And though there were calls from the top for austerity, in 1982, according to South Korean sources, the nation spent four billion dollars of its twenty-five-billion-dollar annal budget for vast public-works projects celebrating Kim Il Sung's seventieth birthday. (As part of the celebration, the people received such gifts as toothpaste and soap.) What little foreign currency reaches the country now comes from weapons sales, from joint ventures with Koreans living in Japan, and from gifts from overseas Koreans loyal to Kim Il Sung.

Not only while North Korea prospered but also after it began sinking, Kim Il Sung had his people build monuments to him. For his sixtieth birthday, in 1972, they built, among other tributes, a colossal bronze statue, and for his seventieth birthday they built an Arch of Triumph taller than the arch in Paris. They also built the Tower of the *Juche* Idea, honoring his guiding principle of North Korean self-reliance. The tower—twenty-five thousand five hundred white granite blocks, signifying each day of his first seventy years—is one metre taller than the Washington Monument. The people converted the thatch-roofed house that is said to be his birthplace into a national shrine; the grounds of the house and the nearby school are marked with signs pointing out his childhood "Reading Site," "Vowing Site," and "Wrestling Site," and also what the curators claim is a peach tree he climbed as a boy. The people are still building what may one day be the world's tallest hotel—the pyramidal Ryugyong. It stands a hundred and five stories tall but remains incomplete and unoccupied. There are reports that the foundation is weak. The North Koreans are reported to have said they would pay a hundred and fifty million dollars to make the necessary changes to the structure, although the cost of the job has been estimated at six hundred million. Meanwhile, the North Koreans are also reported to maintain that the foundation is fine and that they will finish the work just as soon as imported smoked-glass windows arrive.

YOU can look at the hotel in either of two ways—as a cathedral or as a tomb—and, in a sense, both ways are right. Like all the monuments, all the towers, all the schools that bear the name of Kim Il Sung, all the desks covered in white to mark where he once sat, all the hotel rooms kept vacant because he once stepped inside, all the numbered and catalogued lapel pins bearing his image, all the photographs of him that look down from the walls of schools and factories and homes, the hotel is an earthly representation of the greater, never-ending project of creating a world that will endure long after Kim Il Sung is gone.

Kim Il Sung has fashioned a state in which, according to a 1988 report by Asia Watch, the widely respected human-rights-monitoring group, each of the twenty-two million inhabitants is categorized primarily by his or her degree of loyalty to him. There are three main categories and fifty-one subcategories. The "core class," comprising about a quarter of the population, lives in the big cities and gets the best jobs and schools and food. More than half the population falls into the "wavering class," comprising those who pay for the questionable quality of their loyalty with second-rate jobs and homes; their fealty to Kim Il Sung is monitored by the internal-security force. The "hostile class," whose grandparents may have been landowners, or whose parents were accused of collaborating with the Japanese colonial government, or whose relatives have defected or gone to jail, are assigned to hard labor, and often must live in the most remote villages, where Kim Il Sung will never have to see them.

The generations born after the Korean War know only the world that Kim Il Sung wants them to know. They see no foreign newspapers or foreign broadcasts; until very recently, the only radios permitted received just government stations, which featured endless readings



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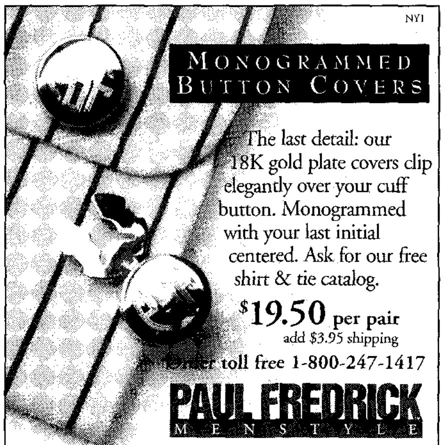
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"Now, young man, you're not one of those little atheists, are you?"

• •

from the eleven hundred collected works of Kim Il Sung. Dissent is unheard-of. Those who have learned something of the outside world—diplomats and students who have returned from abroad—seldom discuss their views in groups of more than two, because, according to Ko Yong Hwan, the former diplomat, when a third person joins a conversation it is assumed that he is a spy. There are reports of public executions, of mass purges, of élite assassination squads, but these are sketchy. There is the same problem of independent verification that was encountered for so many decades in the Soviet Union. Asia Watch now says that some of the sources of information in its 1988 report were not necessarily reliable. The problem of accurate reporting is compounded because one of the few sources of information on life inside North Korea is defectors, and they are eager to tell the South Korean security people everything they think such people want to hear. With each defector whom the South Koreans dress in a new suit and present to the world come stories of at least a dozen labor camps around the country, of two hundred thousand political prisoners living on near-starvation diets, of public executions of adulterers, of asylums to which thousands of political deviants are sent, of special, hidden villages for dwarfs and the physically deformed.

The South Koreans have spent decades demonizing the North and Kim Il Sung. For years, South Korea's succession of military rulers justified the worst of their abuses—the torture and jailing of dissidents, for example—by pointing to the danger from the North. South Koreans conducted guided tours of the border, leading visitors down into tunnels that they insisted the North had dug for another invasion of the South. They dabbed yellow paint on drill marks that they said proved how the tunnellers had worked from north to south. The claims were so excessive that they strained credulity, even on the subject of Kim Il Sung. This fall, an aide at the South Korean consulate in New York saw to it that I was presented with a copy of "The Tears of My Soul," the autobiography of a North Korean terrorist named Kim Hyun Hee, who helped blow up the South Korean airliner in 1987 and now vilifies her cruel North Korean handlers while praising her gentle and sincere keepers in the South.

The two Koreas have never signed a peace treaty. Their vast armies—six hundred and fifty thousand men in the South, and more than a million in the North—sit poised on either side of the Thirty-eighth Parallel. The border village of Panmunjom is a heavily armed camp where North Koreans and South Koreans peer at one another through high-powered binoculars. They meet periodically for talks in a featureless hut. But the talks, more often than not, are simply a forum for voicing their hatred through accusations of ceasefire violations. Panmunjom is a relic, the last of the Cold War border towns, and in it the division between the two Koreas is marked in the soft earth by two different sets of army-boot prints. The boot prints approach but never cross their own edges of the Thirty-eighth Parallel. The South Koreans are joined in their watch by thirty-five thousand American troops, stationed along the border. In Kim Il Sung's view, they are his true enemy. Although he has singled out the South for his terrorism, and has long harbored dreams of once again trying to conquer his neighbor, Kim Il Sung's harshest attacks are aimed at the Americans. It was the United States, along with his patron, the Soviet Union, who decided to split and sacrifice Korea for the sake of their strategic interests. No other act so powerfully evoked just how insignificant Korea was in American eyes.

It is impossible to overstate the impotent rage that Koreans—on both sides of the border, but especially in the North—still feel about the division of their country. Korea, after all, was not Germany, which had started the fighting. It was a colony that the Japanese had ruled for thirty-five years with particular cruelty. Under the Japanese, Koreans were ultimately forbidden to speak Korean; they were forced to take Japanese names (many went to their ancestors' graves and begged forgiveness); Korean women were taken to the front to serve Japanese soldiers as "comfort girls." The Soviets, who were descending on Korea from the north when Japan surrendered, had little interest in it except as a potential bulwark against their old enemy the Japanese. They did not want the whole country, and neither did the Americans, with whom they hastily agreed to split Korea at the Thirty-eighth Parallel. (The actual line was drawn, in part, by Dean Rusk, who later became Secretary of State.) The Korean War, with its wholesale destruction of the nation, only heightened Koreans' loathing. Even today, North Korean propagandists write of how Pyongyang was flattened by precisely 428,748 American bombs. Almost half a century later, Kim Il Sung still tells his people that the moment of their vindication is at hand.

WHEN Kim Il Sung came home to Pyongyang in the summer of 1945, it was as a guerrilla fighter of wildly self-inflated glory. Because the Red Army knew of him and of few others, the Russian generals put him in charge of their half of Korea. He was the undistinguished son of an herbal pharmacist and his devoutly Christian wife; he was thirty-three years old, moonfaced, with no local following; and, mindful of his position, he was eager to please—or, rather, eager to appear to please—the people who put him on the throne where he still sits.

There is no doubt that Kim led guerrilla raids against the Japanese in Manchuria, according to Suh Dae Sook, the author of "Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader," a balanced and well-regarded biography of Kim. While others deserted or collaborated with the Japanese, Kim Il Sung fought on. He gained a reputation for cruelty, for taking hostages and demanding supplies and recruits: he would threaten first to cut off the hostages' ears and then to cut off their heads. Though other guerrilla fighters were better known and more highly respected, Kim Il Sung did attract the attention of a Japanese general named Nozoe Shotoku, and the General's troops hunted him into Russia. That was in 1941, and for the rest of the war Kim Il Sung remained in the Russian Far East, in and near the city of Khabarovsk, just before the full flowering of the Stalin cult of personality.

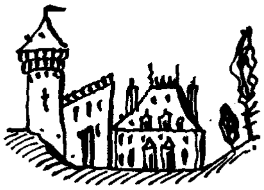
The eminent Stalin biographer Robert C. Tucker points out that Kim Il Sung entered a world where the image of the Soviet ruler and the myth of his power as savior were becoming inescapable. And Kim's exposure to Stalinism was enhanced when he joined an international brigade of Chinese and Korean guerrillas whom the Soviets hoped to use against the Japanese. But by the time that brigade and the Red Army entered Pyongyang the war was over, and the best of the Korean left had descended upon Seoul, assuming that the nation would soon be independent and so the traditional capital was the place to be. Seoul was glutted with potential rulers, including the vanguard of the Korean Communist Party, which in 1931 had been tossed out of the Communist International for "excessive nationalism." Then the American general John Hodge arrived and scrambled to find anyone who spoke English. A staunch anti-Communist, Hodge crushed a nascent leftist republic and smoothed the ascent of Syngman Rhee, an aging rightist who had spent many years in Washington making influential friends. In the North, the Russians, short on names and, like the Americans, high on loyalty and compliance, anointed Kim Il Sung.

The Russians liked Kim, and they liked his surviving son, whom they called Yura. They also liked his wife, whom they called Vera: she cooked big meals when the generals came for supper. Kim was a dutiful student of his Soviet handlers, according to Kathryn Weathersby, a historian at Florida State University, who has been sifting through the Soviet Cold War archives. He developed a knack for the sycophantic telegram, framing his requests for aid and for cadres to assist with his mobilization with such phrases as "deep love and gratitude" and "praise to the heroic Soviet Army." In exchange for Kim Il Sung's loyalty, the Soviets disarmed his potential rivals as they returned from China. They also, to their ultimate regret, listened to his plan for sweeping across the Thirty-eighth Parallel and conquering the South. He told them he could do it in three weeks. The Soviet generals listened in Pyongyang and, in the course of forty-eight telegrams and nearly a month of meetings in Moscow in the spring of 1950, Stalin listened, too.

It took the Soviet-backed North Korean Army not three weeks but six to reach the southern port of Pusan. Then, in one of the great military feats of modern times, General Douglas MacArthur landed his troops behind the North Korean lines at the port of Inchon and drove to the Chinese border. Stalin thereupon refused further help for Kim Il Sung. "It must have been a tremendously traumatic experience for him to be betrayed by Stalin," Weathersby says. But, using his weakness to his advantage, Kim turned to a new friend, Mao. Kim reminded him that a small and loyal ally in dire need of assistance could well use a reliable patron. Mao sent troops, and they did Kim's fighting for him. Stalin, who wanted to keep a hand in, supplied air support, but dressed his pilots in Chinese uniforms.

By 1952, when Vladimir Tolstikov, of *Pravda*, arrived in Pyongyang, the war that had begun with such promise had turned into a stalemate, which would last until the ceasefire, in 1953. But Kim never stopped emulating Stalin, first in his bearing and ultimately in his cult. Like Stalin, Tolstikov says, Kim Il Sung called himself Marshal, and had his official picture taken in his marshal's uniform. Stalin took credit for writing a book called "The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union," and so Kim Il Sung wrote—or said he wrote—a book called "The Great Patriotic War of Korea." Tolstikov says, "Kim Il Sung wanted to be the Great Leader." The Soviets in Pyongyang indulged Kim in public, Tolstikov says, but in private they snickered.

By the early nineteen-sixties, a decade after Stalin's death, in 1953, and several years after Kim Il Sung finally expelled the last Soviets from North Korea, in 1958, the cult of Kim Il Sung began to take hold. His enemies were those who were disloyal—a category that quickly came to include anyone but the men with whom he had fought in Manchuria. All the rest were purged. His father was now said to have founded the Korean National Association, an underground anti-Japanese group, and was credited with writing revolutionary verses like "I'll be unyielding / On the road to restoration / Even though I were torn to pieces." His mother—in reality so passionate in her Christianity that she took a name meaning "rock" or "foundation," after the phrase "Upon this rock I will build my church"—was now said to be joined with her husband against the Japanese. It was she who made the home where Kim Il Sung played on the "Warship Rock," "urging other boys to go and crush the enemy." The hagiography came to include revolutionary grandparents and uncles, and also one of Kim's great-grandfathers, who was immortalized, by a painter of the North Korean Realist school, leading his band of patriots against the General Sherman, an American "ship of aggression," as it sailed up the Taedong River in 1866.



Kim Il Sung built his state on the alluring promise of undoing the past. For five thousand years, Korea had suffered the tenuous fate of small countries surrounded by powerful neighbors. Cursed by geography, surrounded by China and Russia and sitting close by Japan, Korea had nonetheless preserved an almost exclusive racial purity. It had done so by assuming a belligerent pose, by making its neighbors think that invading would not be worth the trouble. And then, recognizing its weakness, it opened the national coffers and paid tribute to those stronger neighbors. Even as his nation lay in ruins in the midst of the Korean War, and Stalin had abandoned him, Kim Il Sung continued paying tribute to his powerful mentor, calling upon the Korean Communist Party to increase mineral exports to the Soviet Union.

Like Kim's manipulation of Stalin and his courting of Mao, his nuclear shell game is merely a modern adaptation of the ancient Korean game of survival, which was perfected centuries ago by a general named Yi Song Gae. In 1388, when Yi was a commander in the court of the Koryo dynasty, the Chinese Army descended from the north and was poised to conquer the territory that is now North Korea. General Yi was ordered to lead an army against the Chinese. He took his army north, but just as it was about to cross the Yalu River he stopped, turned to his troops, and announced that the venture against the powerful Chinese was madness. With that, he reversed course, led his army south, and, seeing the weakness of the Koryo king, seized power for himself. The Chinese, sensing his resolve, thereupon halted their invasion. The border remained intact, and Yi Song Gae started a dynasty that paid tribute to the Chinese and lasted more than five hundred years—until 1910, when the last of his descendants committed the ultimate betrayal, signing the documents that deeded the nation to Japan.

Kim Il Sung, in his isolation, has simply returned to the world that Yi Song Gae created. Yi had sealed the nation's borders, and over the centuries Korea came to be known as the Hermit Kingdom. In the eighteenth century, when the Chinese demanded entry to draw a map of what was their vassal state, the Koreans balked. Finally, after displaying the brinkmanship that Kim Il Sung plays so effectively, they relented—but, rather than open the borders for inspection, they produced a map of their own. It was a useless map, filled with errors.

While other small nations were either devoured or conquered or robbed of any semblance of identity, Korea prevailed. And what evolved over the centuries was a profound feeling of victimization coupled with an inflated sense of grandeur. Koreans paid tribute to Chinese emperors for centuries, all the while feeling themselves cheated of their place as the true Middle Kingdom. For that reason, the North Koreans did not want the nuclear-inspection talks held in Vienna, where they are now taking place, but demanded that the world come to them—to Pyongyang. The demand, seemingly trivial, is at the heart of the world that Kim Il Sung has worked so long to create. "You live in a universe that has a center elsewhere," a particularly astute scholar of Korea told me. "You're on the periphery. Even your king is no better than the Chinese emperor's little brother. Kim Il Sung is saying, 'Let's forget about the big powers. The center of the universe was wrong all along. And it's my job to rewrite history.' "

Kim Il Sung's Korea would be self-reliant. Or, at least, it would claim to be. For him, and his nation, it did not matter that the Soviets put him in charge, or that the Chinese saved him and his nation from extinction in the early days of the Korean War, or that his economy grew only as long as the Kremlin was ready to barter for oil. What mattered was that, like every would-be prophet who opens a storefront church in Seoul and sets a red neon cross on the top, like every aspiring Korean saint who stakes his claim to legitimacy on his personal pain and sacrifice, Kim Il Sung recognized and played to the most potent psychological force in a people whose history can be seen as one long, futile search for salvation from the dark forces surrounding their nation: they are the victims of history, and he is the agent of their redemption.

I MET Kim Jong Su, the North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations, in the lobby of the Upper East Side high-rise where the mission has its offices. He suggested that we go out for coffee, and so, with his aide, we went around the corner to Ottomanelli's, a hamburger place. The aide walked behind him. After we were seated, the aide asked if we wanted cheesecake. He looked disappointed when we both declined, because, in the hierarchy of our gathering, that meant that he could not have cheesecake, either.

Kim Jong Su spoke flawless English. He wore the requisite blue suit. He asked what I was going to say about his President, and when I answered that I did not know he told me the story of the tractor. The story began with the suffering in Pyongyang at the end of the war, after the Americans destroyed it. Then came the resolve and the rebuilding of the city—"I also took part," he said—from nothing. Then came the tractor, in 1958. Until then, there had been no North Korean tractors, Kim Jong Su said, and when an old farmer saw his first foreign tractor, in 1945, he thought that it was an animal and tried to feed it. Kim Il Sung so wanted his people to make their own tractors that he offered his guidance, and called the tractor-makers every day to find out how they were doing. The tractor-makers, Kim Jong Su said, had no tools and had to make every part by hand, "grinding and cutting and scraping." Finally, the day came when the first tractor was finished. The tractor-makers started the engine. But the tractor went only in reverse. When they told Kim Il Sung of this, he was not angry. He told them, "If you can get it to go in reverse, then surely you can make it go forward." He encouraged them to go back to work, and so they did, and the tractor eventually went forward, and the tractor-makers drove it into Pyongyang and showed it to Kim Il Sung—without whom, it went without saying, they could not have done it.

"How would Americans feel if I wrote an article criticizing George Washington?" Kim Jong Su asked me. "That is how we feel when our President is criticized." Kim Jong Su is a confident man, and a worldly one, too. Those who are negotiating here with the North Koreans say they are smart and tough negotiators, and that they are not crazy. In that sense, they are representing their President well. There have been rash moments in Kim Il Sung's past—the seizing of the Pueblo and its crew, or the terrorist attacks against the South Korean Cabinet, for example—but only once has Kim Il Sung gone to war. That was in 1950, when, alarmed by bellicose statements from the South and believing that the United States had no strategic interest in Korea—a reasonable belief, considering the tepid American line on Korea at the time—he decided to strike; even so, he waited until he had Stalin with him. North Korea has never claimed responsibility for any acts of terrorism. It was the Burmese, in conjunction with the South Koreans, who accused North Korean agents of planting the bomb in Rangoon that was intended for the South Korean President, Chun Doo Hwan. (Chun escaped unhurt, because he arrived late.) And the terrorist Kim Hyun Hee admitted that it was she who had planted the bomb on the South Korean airliner, on what she had assumed were orders from Kim Jong Il. The idea was to scare the world away from the 1988 Olympics, in Seoul, she said. And it did not work.

Always, the target has been the South. There, Kim Il Sung has often tried but failed to foment revolution. In 1968, a band of North Korean guerrillas sent to kill South Korea's President, Park Chung Hee, did come within five hundred yards of the Presidential palace in Seoul before almost all of them were killed. One of Kim Il Sung's agents in the South turned out to be a hapless organizer; he ended up before a firing squad.

When Kim Il Sung confronted the United States directly, it was by accident: in 1968, the North Korean Coast Guard intercepted the U.S.S. Pueblo on a spying mission. Kim Il Sung wanted no part of a fight with the Americans, the biographer Suh Dae Sook argues, yet, in a panic, with the American carrier U.S.S. Enterprise in the Sea of Japan, he put his army on alert. The timing was poor for a man who in the past had so skillfully manipulated his patrons. He got no help from the Soviets, whom he had managed to alienate, or from the Chinese, who were angry at him for what they regarded as his fawning on the Russians. His allies among the nonaligned nations offered nothing, either, and Kim Il Sung found himself as he had long said he wanted to be—on his own. But, Suh wrote, Kim got lucky with the Pueblo. While President Johnson was reported to have considered bombing North Korea, the United States, preoccupied with Vietnam and reluctant to fight a second Asian war, chose to negotiate instead. Kim released the Pueblo crew after eleven months, but not until the Americans offered a formal apology—quickly recanted—for violating North Korean territory.

The Pueblo incident, Suh Dae Sook told me, coincided with one of what he believes were three coup attempts against Kim Il Sung. The first, in 1953, was led by a group with ties to Communists in the South. The attempt failed, as did another, in 1957, when a band of former rival guerrilla fighters tried to depose him. And in the late nineteen-sixties Kim, sensing a threat in the growing belligerence of old friends from his years in Manchuria who dominated the military, purged these former partisans. And although he wanted the military checked, Kim Il Sung never stopped threatening. "Pressure or threat will have no effect on us," he told his nation last New Year's Eve. "Such an attempt may invite catastrophe."

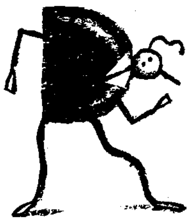
When Kim Il Sung dies, his son is due to succeed him, but there is a theory in Washington and in Seoul that Kim Jong Il, without his father to protect him, is likely to be deposed and killed within a matter of months. Or a year, or maybe two years. The matter of the timing both undermines the theory and reflects the paucity of knowledge of Kim Jong Il. He is alternately said to be a stunted lunatic responsible for his nation's most recent terrorism and described as a wise tactician who understands just how badly his country needs economic reform on the Chinese model. The fear of Kim Il Sung is eclipsed by the fear of Kim Jong Il, about whom nothing can be predicted. He is a man who not only has spent his life in his father's shadow but has gained virtually no firsthand knowledge of the world. All that he knows he has learned from the movies.

The former North Korean diplomat, Ko Yong Hwan, says that when he pictures Kim Jong Il he thinks of a man with a Rothman cigarette in one hand and a glass of Hennessy cognac in the other as he sits surrounded by women between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one. Ko says that at the North Korean Foreign Ministry it was under-

stood that no reports were to be handed to Kim Jong Il on Friday afternoons, because he liked to take off early for the weekend and go pheasant hunting. "Kim Jong Il is short and fat and always wears a plastic smile," he says.

One of the few people now in the West who have spent time with Kim Jong Il is the South Korean filmmaker Simon Shin, whom, along with his wife, Choi Un Hui, Kim had kidnapped in 1978. Kim Jong Il's agents seized them separately, in Hong Kong, and one of the agents told Choi that they were taking her "to the bosom of Kim Il Sung." Shin spent five years in a North Korean prison, because he refused to make Kim Jong Il's movies. When he was released, he was brought before Kim Jong Il and was told that he could make any movies he wanted.

Shin discovered a man who liked movies so much that he watched at least one a day. He had a staff of more than a hundred people just to subtitle the movies in Korean. He enjoyed action movies and adventure movies, and he enjoyed "Butterfield 8," too. "He liked Elizabeth Taylor," Shin says. "He thought she was a beautiful woman." Contrary to rumor, Kim Jong Il did not have an interest in pornography—perhaps, Shin says, because "if he had a fondness for a girl he had her sent for."



Kim Jong Il and Shin watched movies together and talked about movies. Shin recommended movies from time to time. He recommended "Norma Rae" and "F.I.S.T." to help enlighten Kim about the American labor movement. When he finally agreed to make movies—not propaganda, he explains; Kim Jong Il told him that he had other people to do that; he wanted movies he could show around the world—Shin managed to secure the first North Korean screen credit other than Kim Jong Il's.

Kim, Shin says, enjoyed receiving movie credits and state-opera credits and other artistic credits, because he wanted to be considered a cultured man. He is also credited with writing many songs, among them "Where Is the Dear General?"—the theme song for the state-sponsored opera "A True Daughter of the Party," which goes, "From this dark forest far behind enemy lines, / We're wondering where our General is now. / As the chilly autumn wind blows / We yearn for his warm care." According to "Kim Jong Il: The People's Leader"—a prime example of North Korean hagiography—an opera official, "who read the song through in one breath, was completely captivated by its poetic message and for a moment he felt as if he was dreaming."

Shin learned that Kim Jong Il had a wife and two children. The elder child was a boy, whom Shin believed to be about twenty. Kim Jong Il, Shin says, never spoke about the Kim dynasty's continuing with his son. He hid neither his disdain for his stepmother nor his admiration for his father, Shin recalls, and did not introduce Shin to his father until he thought Shin was ready. North Korean propaganda, in fact, has sold Kim Jong Il to his people as a dutiful son, whose primary concern is making sure that his aging father is not overburdened by caring for the nation. Consider this passage from "The People's Leader": "Accompanying the great leader President Kim Il Sung on his tour for on-the-spot guidance, Kim Jong Il solved the problems about which the President was concerned. At the same time, he helped the President's work with distinguished ideological and theoretical activities."

In private, Shin says, Kim Jong Il did not discuss any details of terrorist acts but did make it clear that he didn't consider such attacks wrong. "They were acts of the revolution," Shin says. "This man is not aware of the evil he has caused." Kim Jong Il gave Shin an annual budget of three million dollars and "state of the art" facilities, and told him, "You don't have anything to worry about. I've done you a favor." There was to be a joint North Korean–Hungarian version of "Genghis Khan," but the project was terminated when Shin and Choi escaped their handlers, in Vienna, in 1986. Kim Jong Il, Shin says, is "like a very spoiled boy."

It is tempting to see Kim Jong Il as his father's greatest folly, but that would be to miss the point. Kim Il Sung's greatest folly was not that he anointed his son. It was the cult, because once Kim Il Sung effectively declared himself king and, as all Confucian kings have done, fitted himself with the Mandate of Heaven—the divine right to rule—it was inevitable that his son would succeed him.

"Name me one *chaebol* in Seoul that is not a dynasty," Gari Ledyard, a professor of Korean history at Columbia University, says of the South Korean *chaebols*, or conglomerates, most of which are owned and dominated by families. "There is no church in Korea that is not a dynasty. The ministry goes to the son when the father dies. What's more unusual in Korea is to have a succession independent of family concerns. Everybody understands that."

Now Kim Il Sung finds himself in a bind. He has smoothed the ascent of technocrats, many of whom are relatives, and is teasing the populace with glimpses of the things that will come with free-trade zones and joint ventures. In what are called Paradise Stores, in Pyongyang, anyone can look at Gucci loafers and see what else reform might bring, says Selig Harrison, of the Carnegie Endowment, who interviewed Kim Il Sung in 1972 for the Washington *Post*. But the glimpses, which Harrison sees as an attempt by Kim Il Sung at triggering a "revolution from below," have also unleashed resentment among Koreans of his son's generation.

In Seoul, I met two North Korean defectors, Yoon Oong and Park Soo Oong, who told me of their envy of the children of the North Korean élite who came home from studying abroad carrying "German cassette players." Those young people did not spend their nights as Yoon and Park did, sitting in Park's mother's apartment, playing cards and drinking cheap rice wine. (There is, they said, a lot of drinking at the end of the workday in North Korea.) They were not stuck listening to the government-sanctioned bands like Po Chong Bo and Wang Jae San (named, they thought, after famous battle sites) and songs like "The Three Biggest Merits of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

Just as resentful as Yoon and Park, however, are those same sons of privilege who have been away. A visitor to North Korea told of a walk in Pyongyang one night when he met a group of young men who had recently returned from Eastern Europe; they, like other North Korean students, had been summarily recalled home after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The visitor asked if they would take him to a disco, and the young men agreed. They walked around and around, and finally stepped into a "discolike thing." But the young men were not happy. They were embarrassed by what passed for a disco in their country, with its local music and its Japanese beer. Nor were they happy about being forced to join the work crews on the Ryugyong Hotel, they said. But, what was worse for the Kim regime, they had lost their faith. Like the defector Ko Yong Hwan, who had travelled through Europe as a diplomat, they began suffering the doubts of an apostate when they saw the world beyond the world that Kim Il Sung had built.

The men looked around the room and watched European women entertaining three Party cadres. "They were upset by what they were seeing," the visitor said. "They said, 'The problem is this is so unfair, so unfair. Do you know who comes to this place? The children of fat old men.' "

The visitor left North Korea at the Chinese border. Peering out the train window, he said, he looked over a gate at a man so weary that he did not seem to have the strength to smoke. The man was like the crowds the visitor had seen on North Korean television, offering the cameras a tepid celebration of Kim Il Sung's receiving a record hundred per cent of the vote in yet another election. The revolution endures, the visitor told me, but it feels tired.

Kim Il Sung seems to know that, too. He tells William Taylor, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, for instance, that "we have been hurt badly by the fall of Communism in Russia." Then he reminds him that "we are responding favorably to positive U.S. policy gestures," as if he held the strong hand. Kim Il Sung is looking to deal with Japan, with the United States, with South Korea. But he does this the way he has always done it, by assuming a pose of anger.

"Last year, the imperialists and reactionaries worked more malignantly than ever to isolate and stifle our Republic and crush our cause of socialism," he told his nation on December 31st. "As a result, the situation in our country became extremely tense." He reminded the people that in the past year they had been in a state of "semi-war," and had been called upon "to meet the enemy's challenge and bring about a great upsurge in socialist construction in the same revolutionary spirit and with the same military stamina that they had displayed during the years of the grim Fatherland Liberation War."

Kim Il Sung talks with his foreign visitors about money and trade while dispatching emissaries who preach his gospel of self-reliance. Maybe he will allow the atomic-energy inspectors in, and maybe he will allow them to see only the places he wants them to see. Then the talk between North Korea and the West will grow angry again, and people will wonder what Kim Il Sung will do next. Selig Harrison believes that Kim Il Sung has given up his dream of unifying Korea by force or by revolution, but has not surrendered his intoxicating vision of what Korea was always supposed to be.

Recently, *Rodong Sinmun*, the North Korean newspaper, reported a major archeological discovery: what was believed to be the tomb of Tangun, the mythological founder of the Korean nation, had been discovered in Pyongyang. This proved that the center of the nation was not Seoul, its historic capital, but Pyongyang. If the center is not where you want it to be, move it.

Kim Il Sung continues to attend state operas with his guests. There are several classics, one of the most famous being "The Flower Girl." The opera tells the story of a young woman trying to survive in the midst of the Japanese occupation. The flower girl's life is devoid of meaning. She is a slave to the Japanese and to wealthy landlords. And then she learns of a brave man, and his words give her strength to endure and triumph. She adores this man. He gives purpose to her empty life. She becomes a heroine. He redeems her.

A foreign photographer told me about watching Kim Il Sung at the opera. He sat in the front row, the photographer said, with a guest on one side and Prince Sihanouk on the other. Behind him sat row upon row of the men who had sworn their loyalty to him. Kim Il Sung sat in the middle, behind a long, varnished wooden table running the length of the row. There were perhaps three hundred people in the audience and what looked like thousands on the stage. Kim Il Sung leaned forward in his seat, resting his hands on the table. He looked up at the crowded stage and, as he had done time and again, bore witness to the miracle of his creation. ◆

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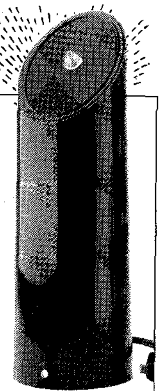

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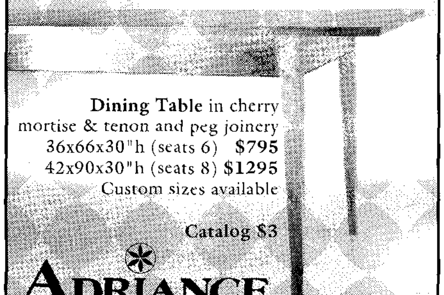

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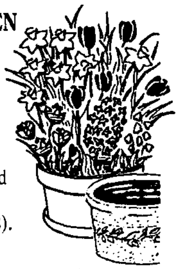

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POPULAR CHRONICLES

SERIOUSLY SILLY

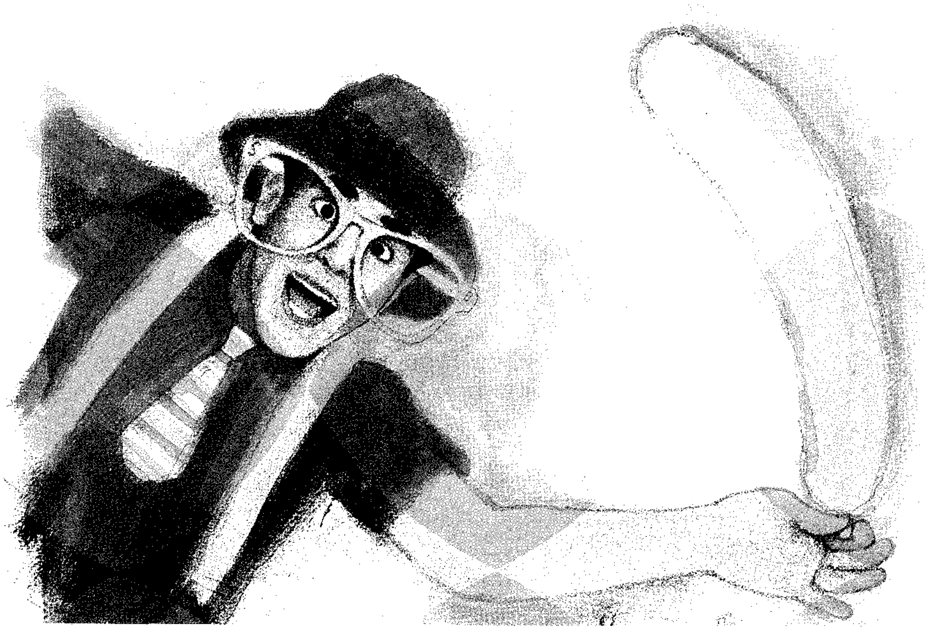
It isn't easy being top clown, especially if, like Silly Billy, you run your own empire and play to that toughest of audiences: New York tots.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

FOR a while, Silly Billy was of the mind that all clowns were fungible. This was in 1989, when his business as a children's entertainer in New York began growing by leaps and bounds; he couldn't personally satisfy all the requests he was getting to appear at birthday parties, so he decided to add personnel. The first was a social worker he saw doing an impromptu routine at a children's Christmas party. Silly Billy was so impressed that he offered to make the social worker his supplementary clown. He named him Silly Willy and taught him the Silly Billy act, which is a mixture of clowning, magic, balloon sculpture, and wisecracks. If clients called when his own calendar was filled, Silly Billy would offer Silly Willy in his stead. For a year or so, the addition of Silly Willy was sufficient, but the children's-party market kept expanding, and Silly Billy eventually had to hire Silly Milly and Silly Dilly. Before they were sent out as Silly Billy affiliates, he taught them the fundamental balloon animals (several breeds of dogs, a duck, a mouse, and a bird) and at least ten good tricks, like Hippety-Hop Rabbits, Farmyard Frolics, Vanishing Ketchup Bottle, Milk Pitcher on Head, and Mixed-Up Santa. For consistency, all the clowns were dressed like Silly Billy—floppy felt hat, red T-shirt, miniature necktie, patchwork pants, rainbow suspenders, mismatched sneakers, no makeup, and lensless plastic eyeglass frames approximately three times normal size—and they all used Silly Billy's magic word, "Googly-googly." This is how Silly Billy came to dominate the clown industry in New York. Not only was he able to supply quality clowns in the Silly Billy mold but he could also diversify price points. If you call his company, The Funniest Clowns in the Whole Wide World, you can request a hundred-dollar clown, which would be one of the associate Sillies, or a hundred-and-fifty-dollar clown, which would be Silly Willy, or you can go for the top, which means engaging the services of Silly Billy himself, who charges from two hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars and is the preëminent clown in town.

SILLY BILLY travels heavy. On the job, he carries a fibreboard case that is four feet high and two feet wide and weighs about eighty-five pounds. On a busy day—that is, a day when he is booked at five or six birthday parties around the city—he might have to hoist the case into and out of half a dozen different taxis. Cabdrivers often decline the opportunity to assist him. Sometimes they look at his case, then look at his patchwork pants and his tiny necktie and his rainbow suspenders and his mismatched sneakers, with their Mickey & Pals Bow Biters, and then look back at the case and crack "Hey, whaddya got in there, pal, a dead body?" and Silly will slap his forehead, then clutch his chest and say "My God, *yes!*"

Actually, the case contains his hat, his glasses, a bullhorn, a camera, a ninety-nine-cent plastic poncho, a Kit Kat, cough drops, a Magic Marker, some Sudafed, and an issue of *Magic;* about twenty magic tricks, including Bongo Hat, Drooping Flower, Chinese Sticks, Silk to Egg, Card on Ceiling, Dove Pan, and Soft Soap; a box of little time-killer props (a deck of stuck-together cards, a troll, a fake hand, a whistle, a squeaker); four different magic wands and a movie clapper; two gross of long, skinny balloons; a few inflatable birthday cakes, a hundred and forty-four heart-shaped balloons, and several hundred somersaulting Silly Billy balloons; several hundred cardboard feet for the Silly Billy balloons; concealer makeup to cover his beard late in the afternoon; a Mak Magic French Arm Chopper; and a cellular telephone. His pants have ten pockets. One is filled with notes about his day's schedule. Beside the name and address he jots down whether the mother sounds nice, whether there is a cute babysitter he might ask out on a date, whether the birthday kid is shy, and also whether the kid has seen him before. Because Silly has performed for so many thousands of parties since his first, in 1985, this last notation is sometimes a double-digit number rather than a simple yes or no. Recently, Silly did a birthday party for a first grader on the Upper West Side; most of the children at the party had seen him at four other birthday parties that month. One group of five-year-olds who are classmates at the Lycée Français de New York, a private school on the Upper East Side, saw him seven times this fall. There are other prominent children's entertainers in New York—Princess Pricilla, Magic Al, Professor Putter, Pinkie the Clown, and Arnie Kolodner, to name a few—but if you are between three and five years old and have any kind of social life at all, you are probably intimately familiar with Silly Billy's work.



If you are between three and five and have any kind of social life at all, you are probably intimately familiar with Silly Billy's work.

PAUL DAVIS

One day last month, Silly was eying his case with some despair, because he had a tight schedule, involving multiple taxi rides—the kind of day that makes him complain that suburban clowns have it easy, since they can just drive themselves around. "On the other hand," he was saying, "I have clown friends out on Long Island who sit around all week with nothing to do, because everyone out there only gives parties on weekends." Silly's schedule that day, a Friday, included a party for six hundred children of the employees of Davis Polk & Wardwell, a midtown law firm; a birthday party for a four-year-old girl on Park Avenue; a holiday party that the Japanese Ambassador to the United States was giving for the children of his staff; and a birthday party for a three-year-old boy in Bronxville. On Saturday, he would be doing a party for a three-year-old girl at an Upper East Side children's gym and a children's holiday party at a Locust Valley country club.

We stood on the corner waiting for a cab that wouldn't be scared off by the enormous case or by Silly Billy's costume. At the moment, most of his costume was concealed: he never puts on his hat and glasses until he arrives at a party, and today he was wearing a down-filled parka that covered him to the top of his patchwork knees. From the neck up, Silly is actually a very regular-looking guy. He has silky black hair, a refined mouth, and the sort of huge, dark, satiny eyes that are standard in clown portraits on black velvet. Out of necessity, he has learned to clean-jerk eighty-five pounds, but his build is smallish and wiry. His hands are fine-boned, square-nailed, fluid, and impressively pale. His clown voice and his normal voice are pretty much the same—light, nasal, and slightly sarcastic. He is rather sly. He has the manner of an older brother who first tortures and teases you, then pulls a quarter out of your nose, levitates the kitchen table, and finally cracks you up.

One day, he said to me, "I just realized that before I became Silly Billy there *was* no Silly Billy." Before he was Silly Billy, he briefly considered being Uncle Funny and, even more briefly, Mr. Funny, and, quite protractedly, was David Friedman. He is now thirty-three years old. His résumé, in reverse chronology, goes: children's performer, 1985 to present; street performer specializing in balloon animals, 1984 to 1986; marketing associate at Doubleday books, March, 1984, to December, 1984; student at Northwestern University, 1978 to 1982; teen-ager/owner/chief executive officer of Tip-Top Novelties, a magic-trick and novelty business (whoopee cushions, itching powder, Snappy Gum, and so forth), 1974 to 1978.

Arriving in the lobby at Davis Polk, we were met by a slender woman in a navy-blue suit. "Silly?" she said, hesitantly. "Bonnie?" he responded. They shook hands. Bonnie had organized Davis Polk's holiday party. Silly had rated her "Nice!!" on his schedule note. She had booked him for the party in early fall, and they had spoken on the phone several times since. One of Silly Billy's business philosophies is that a client should speak directly to his or her specific clown as soon as the date is booked. Bonnie's only special requests were for Silly to do at least one Hanukkah trick and to bring Crazy String. Because this was a big corporate party rather than a private birthday, Silly would be doing a special version of his show: lots of jokes and magic tricks, but not his big finale, in which he makes balloon costumes for all the kids and has them act out a play like "Aladdin" or "Beauty and the Beast." Bonnie led us to an elevator and then down a hallway lined with attorneys' offices and conference rooms, where popcorn, hot-dog, ice-cream, and candy venders were now set up for the party. A juggler friend of Silly's walked by and waved at us. In a big conference room, where Silly was

FOOTNOTE

We're coming back to fetch
what remains: pillow, pillowcase, pall,
a drawing which hung unprotected
above the stove—"Hermes, the Guide
of the Dead," who, for the space of four years,
added spice to our meals. God has still
not been born; the clock stays hanging there;
so, in the hall, does the mirror. How
the flat grows and grows the more it
empties, and how small is Time,
brooding away in the tomblike rooms.
All is now dark, we've
removed the lamps: everything
passes softly through us. From where
my writing desk once was,
I try to decipher a note
on the wall: Your Anger Is Love.
A footnote in the History
of Vanity, still to be written.

—MICHAEL KRUGER

(*Translated, from the German, by Richard Dove.*)

going to perform, several waiters in tuxedos were setting up chairs. Silly started unpacking his case. A patrician-looking man in a chalk-striped gray suit stuck his head in the room and called out, "Silly Billy? Is that you? Are you happy? That is, do you have everything you need?" Silly nodded. A moment later, the man came back, leading a little boy about two feet tall, who was wearing a matching chalk-striped gray suit. They sat in the first row of chairs.

One of the waiters looked over at us and said, "My God—Silly!"

Silly looked up and said, "Ziggy. Small world." He turned to me and said, "Allow me to introduce Ziggy the Clown, the former Silly Willy." To Ziggy he said, "So how was your show?"

"Killer," the waiter said. "I performed for two dozen Yiddish-speaking Orthodox kids, and they loved it."

Silly rummaged around in the case and pulled out a bag of balloons and a prop for the Drooping Flower gag. "Good," he said to Ziggy. "By the way, I'm doing the Underwear trick downtown. For some reason, it works with the kids there and not uptown. It must be a cultural thing. Also, the Multiplying Bananas. Hey, how are your lungs? Blow up a snowman for me."

"What's the Multiplying Bananas?"

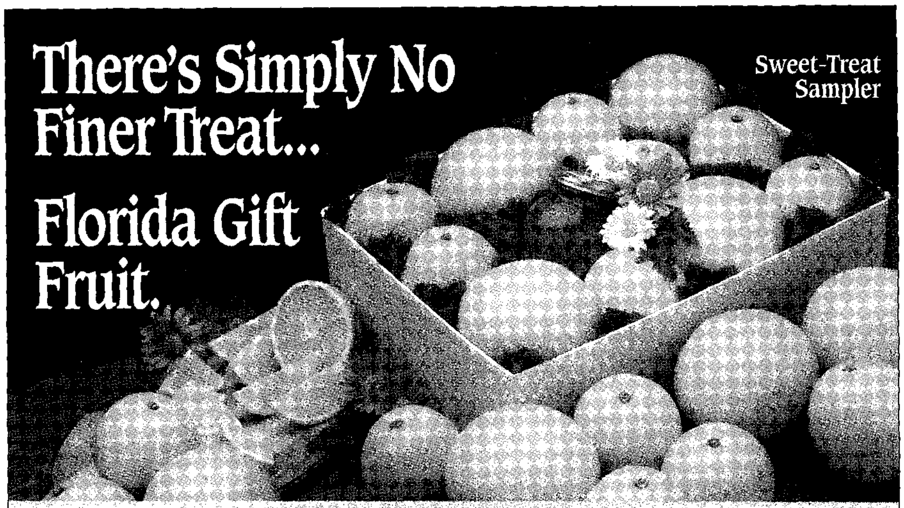
Silly stopped unpacking, gave Ziggy a look, and said, "Please don't tell me you work for me and you don't know Multiplying Bananas." He made a dramatic show of exasperation. Then he explained to him how to multiply bananas. Then he began to explain to me how you turn Silly Willy into Ziggy the Clown: "In the beginning, I thought it was a good idea to make all the clowns interchangeable. Then I started thinking that it was confusing to children to see several Silly Billy-like people, and that as an artist I was diluting the value of the name Silly Billy, because there were so many other Silly-whatevers. I needed to keep my identity more unique." He gave the other clowns new costumes and he renamed them. He went through a Loony phase—there is a Loony Lenny, Loony Louie, Loony Loony, Loony Goony, and Loony Lucy—and then he got more free-form. On his staff now, there are Melody the Clown, for instance, and someone named just plain Clarence.

Silly also decided to reserve exclusive use of "Googly-googly" for himself, so he held an interoffice contest for a new, underclown magic word. The winning submission, "Iggy-la-piggy-wiggy," came from Silly Willy, who happened to be the only clown who refused to change his name; he fought Silly Billy for a year over it. Ziggy told me that even though he was tired of being confused with Silly Billy, he had been Silly Willy for three years and had a considerable following of his own, including people who actually preferred his gentleness to Silly Billy's smart-alecky, edgy style. Nonetheless, Silly Billy insisted. Silly Willy, who in real life performed as a social worker under the name Micah Goldstein, finally gave in to his boss and settled on the name Ziggy the Clown. Now the two of them just fight about tricks and gags and whether Silly is generous enough with his praise. "Basically, we fight all the time, but I'm very loyal to him," Ziggy says of Silly Billy. "After all, he found me. I never planned on being a clown, and then Silly Billy came along. Now I feel like wherever I go I will clown. If I move to—oh, Dallas or something, I will clown. Right now, I still have to do a little catering on the side to make a living, but I would love to do what Silly Billy does—to be a clown full time and have the kind of stature he has. I'm not sure there's room at the top in this city for more clowns at his level. I'm the hundred-and-fifty-dollar clown, the upper-middle-class clown. There are millions of cheap clowns out there, and dozens of upper-middle-class clowns, but only one or two at the high end with Silly Billy. He's the crème-de-la-crème clown."

HIGH-END birthday parties often have high-end birthday cakes. Silly Billy documents remarkable ones for his own amusement. This is why he carries a camera. He once photographed a cake that was a six-foot-long mocha-butter-cream scale model of an aircraft carrier. The theme of the party was the armed services. During the party, an actual helicopter landed on the front lawn. The birthday boy was five years old. Silly has also photographed cakes shaped like a freight train, a fire engine, a Barbie doll, and a panoramic countryside with spun-sugar streams, meadows, cottages, and a population of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Another popular cake is one decorated with a portrait of Silly Billy: many children are so fond of him that they request him for dessert. Recently, a parent hired an artist to produce a marzipan portrait of Silly on a large sheet cake. Silly provided a snapshot of himself for the artist to work from. The snapshot had been taken late in the afternoon, and the artist was extremely faithful to it, so the birthday cake ended up decorated with an almond-paste Silly Billy wearing a five-o'clock shadow.

Sometimes the birthday cake is just a grocery-store variety and the party is in a housing project and there are no gingerbread place cards or Barney tablecloths or mountains of presents: there is just Silly Billy or one of his clowns. Once, Ziggy was telling me about the first shows he did after Silly Billy trained him. His début was in front of thirteen six-year-old Hispanic girls in Spanish Harlem. His second party was held at a McDonald's in the Bronx, but he was tossed out before he could perform, because that McDonald's didn't allow clowns on the premises. In the middle of this story, he interrupted himself and said, "You know, people think only rich parents would have a live entertainer at their kid's party, but we do lots and lots in humble surroundings. I think that for a lot of people having a clown at their kid's birthday party is really important. It's become part of the American dream, like owning a VCR."

Silly Billy does not plan to become an old-man clown. He and Princess Pricilla, who specializes in fairy-tale performances, are brainstorming a Silly Billy–Princess Pricilla television collaboration; he has also started doing performances at parties for adults, under the name David Friedman. For adult parties, he does magic, and he has developed expertise in the field of off-color balloons. He has mastered a balloon man with a rising and falling erection, and believes he will soon have a breakthrough involving ejaculation. He told me this on the Long Island Rail Road while we were riding out to the country-club party in Locust Valley. He had been explaining the advance in balloon technology that took place in the sixties—when the introduction of long, skinny balloons meant that animals could be made out of a single balloon, instead of being pieced together from several separate ones—and absent-mindedly he began making a few balloon men, causing certain parts of them



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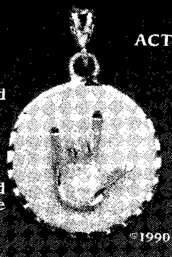

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to inflate and deflate in very interesting ways. An elderly man sitting across the aisle fixed his eyes on us and, for the remainder of the forty-minute ride, did not once look away. By the time we got to Locust Valley, there was a pile of aroused figures on Silly's seat. As we were getting ready to go, Silly started to gather up the balloons, then gave me a sly look and whispered, "I think we should leave them all on the train."

THE Wilcox party, at Park Avenue and Eighty-first: Seventeen four-year-olds, some with mothers, some with nannies. Chloe, the birthday girl, dressed in an Empire-waisted mid-calf red velvet jumper, has been described by her mother as "not shy"—that is, willing to be Silly Billy's assistant in the participation tricks. Silly Billy is familiar with the apartment, which is big and bright, because he has done parties for all the Wilcox children. Before he sets up his props, he asks Bruce Wilcox if he can use the phone. Bruce Wilcox scowls, and says, "Well, don't stay on long. I'm in the middle of a trade." Silly makes a quick call and goes back to setting up his props on a coffee table in the living room. The children stare at him, transfixed. He starts with his warmup—inflating a dozen balloons to be used later, during the play, and allowing every third or fourth one to escape and fly screeching and whistling across the room. He calls Chloe to come up. He tries putting a hat on her head; she balks. He asks her to hold his magic wand; she balks again. He says, "O.K., Chloe, why don't you say, 'Ladies and Gentlemen!' " Chloe stares down. Silly says, "Do you want to talk? You don't want to talk? O.K., we'll do the non-talking tricks." Chloe, looking relieved, sits down. Silly gives her an inflatable birthday cake, which one of her guests, Nicholas, grabs, saying, "I already have one of those." Silly rolls his eyes and says to the mothers, "Four years old and he's already jaded."

In the cab, leaving the party, Silly pulls out his Wilcox-party notes. He always rates his own performance—the scale is "Great Perfect," "Great," "Very Good," or "Good." He also writes "All Knew" if all the kids knew him from earlier parties, or "All New" if they are first-timers. This was a "Most Knew. Great" party. "I know Chloe didn't do the tricks with me, but she had fun," he said. "She was there with me the whole time."

At the home of the Japanese Ambassador: Twenty-three adult women, in fancy blouses and skirts; thirty children, the boys in blazers and the girls in velvet dresses; and one man, in rumpled pants and a cardigan, who sits alone on a big couch. The man on the couch is the Ambassador. The house is grand and formal. Silly decides to do one of his favorite tricks, Card on Ceiling, in which he shuffles a deck of cards and the top one mysteriously shoots upward and sticks to the ceiling. Once it is on the ceiling, it is more or less a permanent part of the plaster. The effect is spectacular in houses with very high ceilings. Silly likes walking past houses where he has performed this trick and checking on the cards months after the party. At the Ambassador's house, the deck explodes and the card flies upward. For a moment, no one says anything or moves, and then the mothers start murmuring nervously, and glance at the Ambassador, who is staring at the card. Finally, he applauds. Silly lets out a small sigh, and then says to the children, in Japanese, "I don't know how to speak Japanese." On his notes: "Great. ½ Knew." From there we go on to Bronxville.

On Saturday, we go to Gym Time, on the Upper East Side, for what Silly Billy calls a fully loaded party. "First, they have you, then the bagels, then Snow White is coming," the Gym Time aide says as she leads us to the party room. "Thank God, there's no Barney. Although I'm sure if they were going to have a Barney they would have got the really good Barney. Anyway, after Snow White the kids are going to play Munchkin Tennis for a while. They've rented the gym for two and a half hours." The birthday girl is turning three today. Her mother pulls Silly Billy aside and says, "Remember, Silly, if you do the Three Little Pigs, she wants the wolf to be *nice*." The party room is large and low-ceilinged and has a cushiony rubber floor. A buffet with platters of smoked fish, trays of fruit, and baskets of bagels and pastries for the adults is set up against one wall, and in the middle of the room is the children's table, set with Snow White tablecloths and plates, minibagels, People Pops, Gummi Bears, Junior Juice, and gift bags. On a separate table, there is an enormous cake in the shape of an English Tudor castle inhabited by the Seven Dwarfs. This is a cake that will go into Silly's photo book. Two mothers are admiring the cake. One says, "My God, the baker really outdid himself on this one, didn't he?"

"Incredible," the other says.

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"I heard he screwed up on the cookies. Look at this cake, though. It's too pretty to eat. Maybe it's, you know, a little *done.*" She gestures toward the children, who have swarmed over Silly Billy. "Look at my kid. Look at him. He's got a hangover. He's been to five birthday parties this week. He's beat." The hungover party boy has started tackling one child after another. His mother says, "I'm telling you, he's just *exhausted.* Look at him!" The boy grabs Silly Billy's leg, and then spots a ball, which he begins kicking around the room. "Brian," his mother calls out. "No soccer now, honey. No soccer!"

After the show, as we are on our way out through the lobby of the gym, we see a pale young woman in a long cape coming in. Silly watches her for a moment and then says, "You know who that is? That's Snow White."

At the show in Locust Valley, which is at a country club called The Creek, there are seventy-five children of all ages. The clubhouse is mahogany-panelled and leather-upholstered. An infant wearing a navy-blue double-breasted gold-buttoned blazer and no pants crawls across the carpet as Silly Billy begins the show. Looking down, Silly says, "Who is this person? Does anyone know this person?" The parents are milling around in the back of the room, holding cocktails and chatting; the blazered baby crawls away. Silly wants this to be a "Great" show or even a "Great Perfect" show, because he's never been hired by the club before. It is the end of a week in which he has entertained at twenty parties, and he's losing his voice, but he droops his flower and shoots his card to the ceiling as if it were the very first time. At the end of the show, he gets a standing ovation, a check saying "Pay to the order of Silly Billy," and assurances that the club would like him back.

On the train home, he says, "Sometimes, when I think about it, I realize that thousands and thousands of kids in New York have grown up watching Silly Billy and saying 'Googly-googly' as their magic word. It really makes me think. That's what goes on in a clown's mind. The big issues are what it means to deal with so many kids, whether I will ever figure out how to make a recognizable Barney balloon, and what is the meaning of life." ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

DOUBT

Even in an apparently simple assault-and-robbery case, it was impossible for the jury not to speculate about the defendant and the young women who provided his alibi. But what happens when a juror returns to his role as a journalist and investigates the details that never came out in court?

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

MARTIN KAPLAN, subway mugger. It sounded like a setup line from an early Woody Allen routine about a bully in the third grade. Nobody laughed, though, while Marc Agnifilo, a young prosecutor, led the victims through their tale of violent assault and robbery at the Astor Place station. The crime had occurred on the night after Christmas, 1991. John Leamy and John Solder, friends since college—they both attended the Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, in the early nineteen-eighties—had spent the evening in the West Village, and were on their way back to the apartment of Solder and his wife, on the Upper East Side. Leamy was living in San Francisco; he had just stopped in New York for the weekend, on his way home from Europe, to see Solder. Then he planned to take a bus west across the country. At the entrance to the Astor Place station, Leamy and Solder found their way blocked by three young men, belligerently arrayed. Leamy tried a technique he had learned as a bartender: he shook hands and made eye contact with each of the men. Then he and Solder went around them and into the station, ignoring the obscene threats that followed them down the stairs.

Toward the bottom of the stairway, they were attacked from behind. Both men were knocked to the ground and repeatedly punched and kicked. Both fought back, to little effect. Leamy remembered yelling, "Enough! Enough!" and seeing something shiny—a knife, he thought—in the hand of Solder's main assailant. Eventually, one of the attackers headed back up the stairs and—according to an eyewitness, who also testified—waved a wallet and shouted, "I got it! Let's get the fuck out of here!" Leamy was by then flat on his face, unaware of his surroundings, and was bleeding heavily from the mouth. "My bottom lip was . . . hanging off, hanging down," he recalled. The two remaining attackers finished their work and fled. The mugging was over. Leamy's face was cut and battered, one eye blackened, his skull a mass of knots, his ribs badly bruised. Solder's face was also battered and swollen, one of his eyes also blackened, his ribs also bruised. He had not been stabbed, but he had lost his wallet.

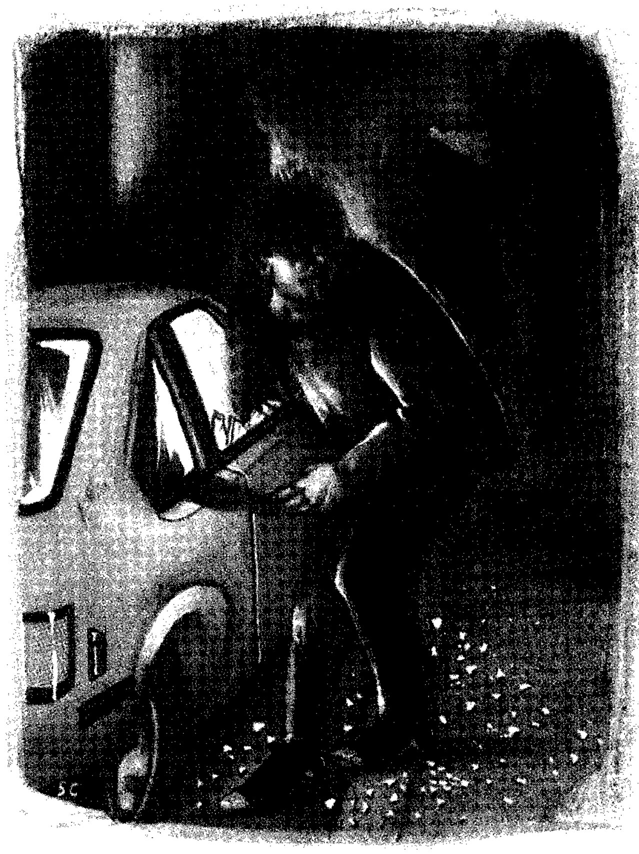
The eyewitness, Carroll Wilder, had already called 911. His testimony corroborated Leamy's and Solder's on all the main points. A tape recording of his 911 call was played in court. Shouts and blows could be heard in the background, and Wilder, who was clearly standing very near the assault, was asked to describe the assailants. "White! All white!" he said. "Five guys! Quick, get somebody here!"

The police arrived before Wilder got off the phone. He and Solder and Leamy, who had recovered his senses, were driven to St. Mark's Place and Second Avenue, two blocks away, where the police already had a suspect in custody. It was Martin Kaplan, a twenty-three-year-old white male. The victims and the eyewitness all identified Kaplan as one of the assailants at Astor Place. Kaplan had not been the one with the knife—Wilder, too, had seen a knife, more clearly than Leamy had—but Kaplan had been, according to Wilder, "particularly violent." Kaplan didn't have Solder's wallet on him, but his hands were bloody, and his boots were spattered with something that looked like blood. He was arrested and charged with assault and robbery.

Now, almost sixteen months later, Kaplan was on trial in New York State Supreme Court, in a windowless, blondwood courtroom on the sixth floor at 111 Centre Street, in downtown Manhattan. I, for my sins, was on the jury. Kaplan's alleged fellow-muggers had never been caught, and he was facing two counts of second-degree robbery and two of third-degree assault. If Leamy and Solder had agreed, on the night of the attack, to go to a hospital—they were examined by paramedics but were treated at home by Solder's wife, a physician—the assault charges might have been more serious. As it was, though their injuries troubled them for many weeks, and left scars inside Leamy's mouth that still bothered him as he testified, the assault charges were only misdemeanors. The robbery charges, however, were felonies, though the amount of money stolen had been insignificant.

In his remarks during jury selection, Agnifilo, the prosecutor, emphasized a legal idea that he called "acting in concert," meaning that even if Kaplan had not himself taken the wallet, he was responsible for its being taken, because he and his confederates had acted together with the same intent. But the prosecution witnesses—the victims, the eyewitness, and two police officers involved in the arrest—were now forced to reidentify the suspect from photographs, for Kaplan attended only the jury-selection phase of his trial. He then, according to Judge Frederic S. Berman, who was hearing the case, exercised his "right to choose not to be present."

Jerald Rosenthal, Kaplan's lawyer, tried to shake Leamy's and Solder's identification of his client by suggesting that they had been drunk at the time of the attack or had been too groggy afterward to think clearly. He dwelt on discrepancies in their and Wilder's descriptions of the boots that had been applied to Leamy's face and ribs. In Wilder's 911 call, in the testimony of the three men before a grand jury, and in their trial testimony, the boots appeared, variously, as Army boots, combat boots, commando boots, and motocross boots. Kaplan's boots had been confiscated and were admitted as evidence. Rosenthal told the jury in his opening remarks, "Those of us who were in the service know what combat boots look like, and they are nothing like the boots that will be shown to you today." The boots were of black leather, nearly knee high, with many buckles and a big metal shin guard. Rosenthal, who was short, stout, natty, and white-maned, had a habit of addressing the jury over a pair of half-glasses perched on his nose. He was aggressive with Leamy and Solder, but he also had to be careful. They were attractive characters: Solder, fair-haired and easygoing, programmed computers for an investment bank; Leamy, black-haired and intense, let it be known, earnestly, that his latest painting was an eight-by-eight-foot allegorical work about Vincent van Gogh. The two men were effective witnesses, low-key and articulate, and they had been, after all, victims. As such, they were not well cast—both men were good-sized and athletically built—but photographs of them taken immediately after the attack and admitted as evidence left no doubt about how badly they had been beaten. Their handsome faces were gruesome, abraded masks. When Leamy spoke of the "mortal terror" he had felt during the attack, no one had to wonder what he meant.



SUE COE

Photographs of Martin Kaplan taken shortly after his arrest were also admitted as evidence and circulated among the jury. Two at a time, we studied the pictures. They showed a slim, sour face, high-cheekboned and pale-eyed; punk hair; and a leather jacket—the street version of the rangy, silent defendant in the cheap black suit who had dozed his way through jury selection.

Rosenthal also had to be careful with Wilder, for he, too, was an attractive character—a big, young, well-spoken African-American computer programmer and bridge player, who after an evening of bridge had been on his way uptown. Wilder was plainly a hero. Other bystanders had run off down the platform when the mugging started; Wilder had stayed and called 911. He had gone with the police to Second Avenue—travelling, incongruously, in a city bus driven by one Officer William Ungro, who had been using the bus on plainclothes patrol, and who testified in the Kaplan trial but failed to explain how a bus functioned in undercover work—and then to the police station, where he was kept until 5 A.M. By the time he was allowed to leave, he testified, "I was tired, I was angry, because I thought I had done the right thing to help these two guys, and I was kept in the Police Department all morning." Wilder nonetheless turned up to testify before the grand jury, and then, of course, at the trial itself, where Rosenthal, while careful to keep his questioning amiable, proceeded to read out a portion of Wilder's sixteen-month-old grand-jury testimony in order to show deficiencies in his original description of the assault. Wilder doggedly testified for most of an afternoon, his exchanges with the lawyers filling nearly seventy pages of trial transcript, before he finally wailed, in answer to a stream of questions from Rosenthal about the disposition of the effects of Solder and Leamy and their attackers on the floor of the subway station after the attack, "My life has been going on since then!" He was excused, and as he hurried away from the courtroom he was heard to observe, to a startled group of bystanders, that it was certainly true that no good deed goes unpunished.

Marc Agnifilo had led his witnesses carefully through their testimony. Compactly built, wearing what seemed to be the same baggy dark suit each day, he had a boyish, equable, slightly abashed manner—like a New York–Italian version of Wally Cleaver. He was well prepared and seemed to believe he had a strong case. I had no notion what my fellow-jurors were thinking—we were always instructed not to discuss the case during our frequent breaks from hearing testimony—but Agnifilo's confidence was certainly justified insofar as I was concerned. I had been ready to convict since Leamy stared at the photographs of Kaplan, swallowed hard, and said, "Absolutely."

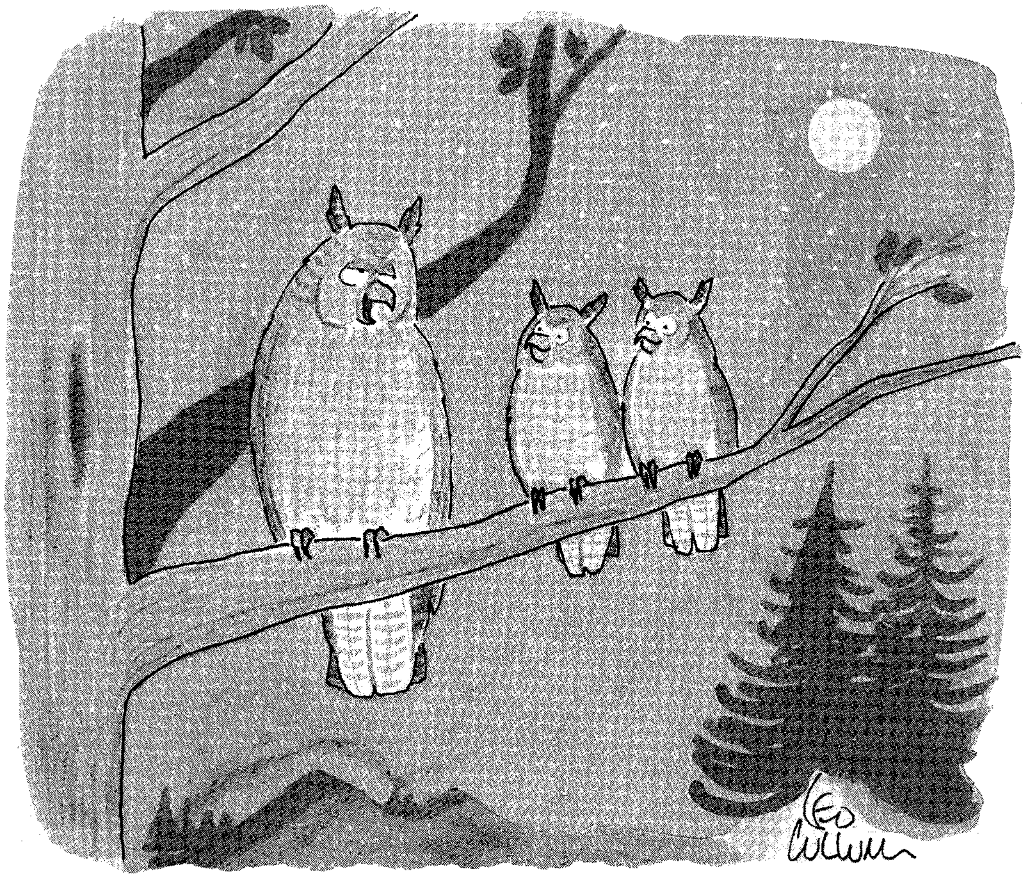
KAPLAN offered an alibi defense. Or, as Jerald Rosenthal memorably put it in his opening remarks, "obviously, the person who committed the horrible act, which seems senseless to us when we think about it, looked exactly like my client or enough like him that they would be able and continued to say that he is the person who did it, for there is an episode from 'Star Trek' where people can beam all over the place, but it's physically impossible for us to be virtually two places at once." The word "alibi," Rosenthal explained, means simply "elsewhere," and Kaplan had indeed been elsewhere—specifically, in a taco bar on Second Avenue called San Loco—at the time of the attack on Solder and Leamy.

Two young women got up and testified to that effect. The first, Leah Tagliaferri, had been Kaplan's live-in girlfriend at the time. She was in her early twenties, brown-haired, pretty, clear-eyed, and strong-voiced, more Irish-looking than Italian. She described a rather aimless evening of wandering around the East Village—Kaplan, she said, "has been pretty much in that area for a while." Kaplan had left her and two other friends at a table in San Loco "maybe a couple of minutes before he got arrested" on the street outside—not nearly enough time for him to go to Astor Place, two cross-town blocks away, commit a robbery, and return. Questioned about his bloody hands, she said that they were often that way. "He is not a very clean person," she said. "He is always picking things on his hands." She shed little light on why she, a well-scrubbed, good-looking child of the suburbs—she wore a black cotton skirt and a neat black blouse sewn with red flowers, and her mother, whose presence the prosecutor noted, came in from Long Beach, Long Island, every day to watch the trial—would have been living with the unkempt likes of Kaplan. They had met in early 1991, she said, when she was living in Tudor City, across from the United Nations, and Kaplan, who was a friend of a roommate, had come to stay with them. Within "like a week," she said, they were lovers. The couple later moved out to Long Beach, where they were living when Kaplan was arrested. Tagliaferri's parents had originally put up seventy-five hundred dollars to bail Kaplan out of jail. The money had since been returned to them, but Leah herself, though she and Kaplan were no longer romantically attached, and though she had very little in the way of savings (she was working as a horse-carriage driver in Central Park), had helped put up further bail. When she was asked why she had done so, and why she was testifying—she had not been subpoenaed, and a transit-police detective had visited her at home and warned her of the consequences of perjury—she replied stoutly, "Because I don't think it's right that he should go to jail for something he didn't do."

Luciente Castellano was the second alibi witness. She was about the same age as Tagliaferri and Kaplan, and had long, dark hair, which she wore straight down; a pale, heart-shaped face; and big dark eyes. She wore a black suit over a white blouse, and she seemed nervous. She and Kaplan had been friends, she said, since they were about thirteen years old, and she, too, had been in the taco bar with him at the time of the mugging. Castellano's account of the evening included a stroll that she and Kaplan took along St. Mark's Place, which Tagliaferri had not mentioned, but otherwise she corroborated Tagliaferri's testimony. Castellano, too, had been visited by the transit-police detective, Jerry Lyons: he had come to see her three times, in two offices where she worked. Much of the questioning of Castellano focussed on her exchanges with Detective Lyons, including a telephone conversation immediately after his first visit, in which she apparently claimed that she had not even been with Kaplan on the night in question. If she had said that, Castellano now explained, it was only because she was afraid of getting involved with the case, afraid that her family and her boyfriend would be angry with her for being "involved with Martin at all." She had subsequently decided that it was her duty to testify. Why? "Because I know that Mr. Kaplan is innocent."

When the defense had rested its case, the prosecution called a rebuttal witness: Detective Lyons. He described his visits with Castellano in less dramatic terms than she had, leaving out elements of threat and intimidation, which she had emphasized, but adding the claim that during his first visit with her she confided that Tagliaferri had asked her to lie to help Kaplan construct an alibi. Detective Lyons had brought to court his notes from that conversation, however, and they turned out to contain nothing about Tagliaferri's alleged request. Lyons had also, it emerged, tape-recorded, without Castellano's knowledge, the conversation they had on his third visit to her. When that tape was played in court, the jury heard the veteran detective telling the frightened secretary that her story about Tagliaferri asking her to lie was already part of a written report that "the lawyers are entitled to see." On the tape Castellano could be heard denying, just as she had denied on the witness stand, that anyone had ever asked her to lie, or that she had ever told such a story to Lyons; and her description of the events on the night of the crime was, again, exactly the same one she had given in court. Rosenthal, in his cross-examination of Lyons, was at pains to point out that the detective's statement to Castellano that he had a written record of her alleged remarks about an invitation to perjury had been false.

The two lawyers then gave



"When I first saw your mother, she was bathed in moonlight."

their summations, Rosenthal proclaiming that "there is no more horrifying thing in human events than being charged with a crime that you didn't commit," and Agnifilo attacking the credibility of the alibi witnesses, recapping the crime (he again played the tape of Wilder's 911 call), and recalling the three eyewitness identifications of Kaplan that we had heard. Then the judge gave his charge to the jury. For more than an hour, he explained the charges against Kaplan and spelled out our responsibilities. Finally, nine days after the beginning of jury selection, we were allowed to retire to our deliberations.

"Excuse me, I'm lost. Can you direct me to the information superhighway?"

THE jury was a grab bag of Manhattanites. There were two bankers, an engineer, an architect, an insurance agent, a retired teacher, a legal secretary. The twelve of us had already spent a formidable amount of time together—reading and chatting and twirling our thumbs, since we were forbidden to discuss the one thing we had in common: the case that had taken over our days. Now, free at last to talk about it, we first agreed to take a voice poll to see if we had anything to talk about. The polling showed ten people ready to convict. I was one of the dissenters: something had happened to my certainty since the prosecution presented its case. The other dissenter was the retired teacher: she said she had found Kaplan's alibi credible.

We started discussing the alibi, and were soon busily contravening Judge Berman's instruction that we "must not, under any circumstance, indulge in speculation or guesswork, nor are you to consider anything outside of the evidence." We guessed and speculated about the lives and motives of the alibi witnesses, trying to put "the evidence" into some narrative context that made sense. Those with more experience of the East Village tried to evoke the neighborhood's street life for those with less. Odd details got pawed over. Detective Lyons had testified, for instance, that Luciente Castellano told him during one of his visits that Kaplan, just before his arrest, had left San Loco with a flashlight he hoped to sell on the street. To at least one juror—a young white businesswoman, a native of Alabama, who had come to court every day impeccably dressed—this seemed somehow implausible. "I mean, come on—a *flashlight*?" To others, the flashlight simply conjured a world. It was clear already that each juror was seeing a cast of characters formed out of his or her own life and preconceptions. The Alabamian saw Kaplan and his friends as creatures of an urban underworld, not to be trusted. The schoolteacher saw them as just a bunch of kids, aimlessly hanging out.

Meanwhile, the impossibility of considering only "the evidence" was so obvious it was hardly mentioned. As jurors, we had been kept firmly in the dark throughout the trial, allowed to hear only what the judge deemed fit for our ears. We had no idea who Martin Kaplan really was. We didn't even know whether he had a criminal record, whether he was a career mugger, or what. It was right and just, of course, that we didn't know such things—Kaplan was charged with this crime, and not others—but it was also frustrating, and the disputed facts before us would make sense only if we could imagine the worlds around them. And so we told each other stories.

My reluctance to convict, which had been stirred by the alibi testimony, had been only strengthened, I realized, by the prosecution's rebuttal case. I tried to take my fellow-jurors through the surprise calls by Detective Lyons on Luciente Castellano, to show how they served to bolster her story. If she had in fact told him that Tagliaferri asked her to lie, would he really have forgotten to include that in his notes? And why did the story she told him during his last visit, when she did not know she was being taped, comport so exactly with the story she told on the witness stand? Finally, why did he mislead her about having a written record of her alleged claim that Tagliaferri had asked her to lie? Not all the jurors recalled that the tape had caught Lyons intimidating and misleading Castellano, so we asked to hear it again. Even after hearing it, some of them, including our foreman, an engineer and Vietnam veteran who seemed otherwise skeptical-minded, declined to agree with my interpretation of the detective's motives. I said that the prosecution was plainly trying to discourage Kaplan's friends from testifying. The prosecution wouldn't do that, the foreman muttered. But a young architect named Timothy Hyde, who was emerging as the spokesperson for the conviction camp, said quietly, "I think Lyons' testimony has been discredited," and the detective was not mentioned again.

A second voice poll revealed that, my efforts notwithstanding, the jury was still ten to two to convict.

We turned to the positive case: the

evidence placing Kaplan at the scene, committing the crime. We had requested earlier that various exhibits, including the boots he had been wearing that night, be delivered to us in the jury room. Now we passed the boots around the table, peering dubiously at the brown stains on the metal shin guard. Were they in fact blood? It was generally regretted that they had not been sent to a serology lab for testing. If the stains had turned out to be blood, of John Leamy's type, there would have been, it was generally agreed, nothing more to discuss. As it was, the positive case against Kaplan was still extremely strong.

Nearly everyone on the jury was contributing regularly to the discussion. The only exception was a middle-aged white woman who sat in a corner, knitting. During one of the few lulls in our deliberations, someone suddenly asked her what she thought. She looked up, startled. She worked her mouth, searching for words. She was shy, and she was not, she had already made clear, an educated woman. Finally, she said, "Well, it seems to me like these two girls are lying so their friend won't go to jail."

There was a deflated silence, then a couple of appreciative titters. "So," I said, after a minute, feeling foolish. "That's the prosecution's case. But have they really disproved the alibi?"

We went back to work on the alibi, detail by detail. Attention was concentrated, naturally, on the schoolteacher and me. Did we really not see the little hole here, the implausibility there? The women, in particular, chided me. "You don't understand what these girls will do," the fashionable Alabamian said. "They'll say *anything*." She found an ally in Lily, a young black legal secretary, who had sat on my left throughout the trial and now, in the jury room, continued to do so. "When their man is in trouble, they don't care," Lily said. She studied me. "You *don't* know what they're like," she said. At the trial's emotional high points, and at some of its low points as well, she had gently but eloquently elbowed me in the ribs. Now, when my arguments got too fanciful, she snorted and backhanded me across the upper arm.

The discussion veered occasionally into the seriously fanciful, as when it began to concentrate on Leah Tagliaferri's mother, who had silently watched the entire trial from the public benches: an enigmatic figure well cast for our favored pastime—speculation and guesswork.

But Timothy Hyde helped keep us on track. Precise and self-effacing, he took us through the alibi testimony again and again, carefully drawing out the discrepancies between the two women's accounts. We asked to hear a section of Tagliaferri's testimony about the night of the crime read again. The schoolteacher seemed inclined to view any small discrepancies as the inevitable confusion of separate recollections of mundane events by imprecise youths, and I was inclined to agree with her. But I was also reaching the conclusion that, while the burden of proof lay always with the prosecution, an alibi defense presented special difficulties. The judge, in his charge, had told us that "the people must disprove the alibi to your satisfaction beyond a reasonable doubt." But wasn't the standard of reasonable doubt that we were supposed to apply to the positive case different from the standard we should apply to the alibi? That is, the two stories were inextricably related, so didn't they need to be weighed against each another? Considered on its own, the alibi, it seemed to me, was virtually impossible to disprove conclusively.

As I was trying to sort out these questions, a court officer knocked on the jury-room door. The judge wanted to see us. We filed back into the courtroom, and there the court clerk asked if we had reached a verdict. Our foreman said we hadn't, and the judge informed us that we had been deliberating for five hours. I was amazed; I would have said half that much time had passed. It was getting late, the judge said. He was going to sequester us for the night. Our families would be informed.

SEQUESTRATION seemed absurd. It wasn't as though we needed to be shielded from the press, or from bribery attempts, or from mob hit men. And if the notion was that with the threat of sequestration hanging over our deliberations we might reach a verdict sooner rather than later, then why had no threat been made, no deadline set? Instead, we were suddenly taken into custody. And I, along with the schoolteacher, was responsible. I felt awful, and braced myself for a wave of coldness from the group as we gathered our things and were herded into an elevator behind the courtroom. But the

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SHAME

Shame left me when I was very sick
unprotesting I uncovered to strangers' hands gave up to strangers' eyes

the poor secrets of my body

They strutted into me sharply increasing the abasement

My professor of forensic medicine old man Mancewicz
when fishing the suicide's corpse from out the pool of formalin
bowed over it as if to apologize
and then with an expert movement spread open the splendid thorax
the silenced basilica of breath

delicately almost tenderly

Thus—faithful to the dead respecting ashes—I understand
the ire of the Grecian princess her stubborn no
she was right—brothers deserve dignified burials

earth's winding sheet drawn carefully over
the eyes

—ZBIGNIEW HERBERT

(Translated, from the Polish, by Charles Kraszewski.)

mood was giddy, mock-woeful, off-to-summer-camp. Jokes flew back and forth about Officer Ungro and his undercover bus waiting for us outside. My mumbled apologies were jovially rebuffed.

We ate dinner in a gaudy old downtown haunt called Peggy Doyle's. Conversation at my end of the table was about recent books and films; a banker named Chris, who had just seen "Indecent Proposal," contributed a thoughtful review of Demi Moore's postpartum body. I tried to make a quick call on a public phone at the back of the restaurant, hoping to apprise my girlfriend, Caroline, of my plight, but one of the court officers accompanying us appeared, wagging his finger. No calls.

On the van ride out to a Holiday Inn in Queens, I found myself wondering if our sequestration was not, indirectly, Caroline's fault. That is to say, she is a lawyer, specializing in criminal defense, and she and I had had some bruising arguments about her work. I would be appalled by the foul deeds attributed, sometimes with good reason, to her clients, and flabbergasted by her energetic representation of them. Confused and angry, with a picture of the victims stuck in my mind's eye, I could lose sight entirely of her clients' right to a fair trial and competent counsel. So now that I was a juror I wondered if I wasn't perhaps trying to make amends, giving the defendant the benefit of a little extra doubt, imagining that Caroline would approve.

Or was I just being gullible? I remembered that Caroline had once said, laughing, "You believe anything a good-looking female says. If it's a girly girl, you just can't imagine that she would really do anything wicked." Leah Tagliaferri and Luciente Castellano were both good-looking females—they probably even qualified as girly girls, whatever those were—and it was true: I found it difficult to accept that they might simply be lying.

My roommate for the night was a man in his mid-fifties. He was a Mason, a photographer, and an insurance agent on the Upper West Side. While a court officer sat outside our room insuring we didn't escape, and the LaGuardia air traffic roared ceaselessly overhead, my roommate, who was a sweet talker, told me stories about growing up black in rural Georgia in the nineteen-forties. Later, he slept soundly. I counted the hours.

In the morning, at breakfast, Lily sat as usual on my left. She was now monitoring me, it seemed, for the rest of the jury. In the van the night before, I had said something to her about how abruptly the judge had sequestered us, and how I thought we might have reached a verdict if he had given us a little more time—and Lily had turned and given a thumbs-up sign to those in the seats nearby. Now, over breakfast, I made an aside to her about having a reasonable doubt about what was actually in the eggs. Lily didn't like the sound of that. She turned and stared at me. She shook her head. "Bill, Bill, Bill," she said, and lightly knuckle-punched me in the arm.

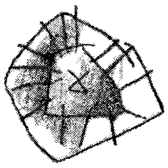
ON our second day of deliberations, the schoolteacher and I quickly caved in. I don't know what her rationale was, but I cobbled together a little theory about reasonable doubt and an alibi defense. My notion—which was only common sense—was that the strength of the positive case, placing the defendant at the scene committing the crime, set a standard of proof that the alibi then had to clear. In this case, the standard had been set quite high: an identification by three eyewitnesses. Was the alibi sturdy enough to clear that standard? On close examination, I decided, it was not. It wasn't necessary to decide that the alibi witnesses were lying—only that there was enough room within the frames of their separate accounts for Kaplan to have slipped away for ten or fifteen minutes and participated in the attack. (Another way to put this might be that I had at first thought the burden of disproving the alibi fell entirely on the prosecution's rebuttal case, which had not, in my view, succeeded. More realistically, it fell on the prosecution's entire case, which had been far more persuasive.) And so, after ninety more minutes of discussion, I changed my vote. The schoolteacher did the same. And thus we found Martin Kaplan guilty on all counts.

Judge Berman, after hearing our verdict, thanked us and discharged us. Then he visited us in the jury room as we were collecting our things. Until then, we had seen him only across the courtroom. Tall and gaunt in his robes, with a fine head of white hair and a slow, formal, civics-lesson manner, he had been an exceed-

MR. OXYGEN
"MR.O"
D. Reilly

ingly judgelike judge. Now, at close quarters, we could see that his eyes, deep-set under thick white brows, were red and inflamed-looking. This revelation changed his whole presence, somehow. He distributed a set of school-award-type Certificates of Jury Service, signed by him, and asked if we had any questions.

Yes, our foreman said. Where was Martin Kaplan?



The judge chuckled. "I thought you might be wondering that," he said. Kaplan had skipped bail after jury selection, he said, and it had been decided to proceed without him. "I issued a warrant for his arrest, of course, as soon as he disappeared."

But what about his right not to be present?

The judge shrugged. He didn't have a right to skip bail. The judge had put the best face on Kaplan's absence when he explained it to us in the courtroom not only because he wanted to avoid prejudicing us against him but because, he said, "I thought the defense case was weak enough as it was."

I was stunned. While the judge's admonition that we infer nothing from Kaplan's absence had been, perhaps, the only part of his instructions concerning speculation and guesswork that the jury actually followed, and while I had been careful about not discussing the case, I had once mentioned to Caroline that it was an empty-chair trial. She had seemed surprised. "Yes," I said. "The defendant is exercising his constitutional right not to be present." She had made a strange face and abruptly left the room. Now I realized that she had been struggling not to laugh. I had pictured Kaplan down the street somewhere, strategizing over the phone with Rosenthal during breaks. She had known immediately that he had skipped.

As it happened, the judge went on, Kaplan was now in custody. He had been picked up on another charge, and was on his way from Riker's Island to the courthouse to hear our verdict.

Though we had been discharged, few of the jury members seemed inclined to leave. We milled in the corridor outside the courtroom, lingering over our good-byes. A group of us buttonholed Marc Agnifilo, who was quietly enjoying his triumph. I asked what Martin Kaplan had been rearrested for.

"Breaking into a car, apparently," Agnifilo said. "That's what he does. The guy's got like thirty convictions."

Were they for violent crimes?

"He's not usually violent," Agnifilo conceded. "Only if you catch him breaking into your car. Then he might beat the hell out of you."

Any narcotics convictions? (Our speculation during deliberations had featured a lot of drug abuse, with addiction a possible robbery motive.)

"Many. He's a heroin addict, and apparently a heroin dealer."

And, I thought, my mind now reeling, the alibi witnesses were no doubt drug customers. And Tagliaferri's mother, it suddenly occurred to me, seemed to have a wasted look. Was Kaplan, perhaps, her connection? That would clear up *that* mystery. I found my face getting hot with chagrin at the thought that I had wanted to acquit this thug, sending him back out to beat someone else to a pulp.

I asked what had happened to Kaplan's first lawyer. (We had heard testimony about a lawyer who had preceded Rosenthal. My assumption was that this was a public defender and that Kaplan's friends, believing that his chances would be better with a private lawyer, had decided to hire Rosenthal.) Agnifilo said his impression was that the first lawyer, who was indeed a public defender, had been confronted with an ethical dilemma after Kaplan insisted on mounting an alibi defense. "You're not allowed to put somebody on the stand who you think is going to lie," Agnifilo said. So the public defender had withdrawn. Rosenthal, a private attorney, was also paid by the state in this case, he added.

I had heard enough.

Four or five of us, including Timothy Hyde, the schoolteacher, and the Alabamian, went across the street for a deli lunch. We had decided to stay to see Kaplan. After lunch, we returned to the courtroom, sitting now on the public benches. Kaplan was brought in. He was handcuffed, and dressed in jail dungarees. He looked angry and distant. The judge informed him of our verdict, and scolded him for having risked the bail money put up by his friends, Tagliaferri and Castellano. Kaplan curled his lip and said nothing. The judge set a date for sentencing, and warned Kaplan that he would be sentenced as a "predicate felony offender," citing a prior conviction for attempted grand larceny. As the trial officially ended, I noticed that my ally, the schoolteacher, was weeping. I was surprised, for I was by now feeling relieved and righteous about our verdict.

THREE weeks later, at Kaplan's sentencing, my feelings were much the same. I wasn't sure why I was there; I was the only jury member who had turned up. Luciente Castellano was also there, dressed in a black leather jacket, jeans, and sandals. Kaplan was brought in, looking strikingly healthier after three weeks in jail. He winked at Castellano, and she blew him a kiss. Two armed guards stood at his sides while his handcuffs were removed. Jerald Rosenthal and Marc Agnifilo were back at their accustomed posts.

First, Rosenthal asked, in his fulsome, perfunctory way, for the verdict to be set aside and Kaplan granted a new trial. The reason? Kaplan had not been brought immediately, after he was rearrested and discovered to be "in the system," to the courtroom where his case was being heard. Judge Berman denied the request, and ordered that the sentencing proceed.

Kaplan stood.

Agnifilo, asked for his views, recommended a sentence of six to twelve years, citing the violence of the assault and Kaplan's lengthy criminal record, which included no fewer than four convictions *since* the Christmas mugging. Castellano, who was sitting near me, muttered angrily during the prosecutor's remarks, disputing sotto voce each detail of his version of Kaplan's record.

Rosenthal then asked that Kaplan be allowed to make his plea for leniency in camera. This request denied, he announced, rather dramatically, that any sentence longer than the three-to-six-year minimum that Kaplan faced would be "a life sentence," for "it seems Mr. Kaplan has been found H.I.V.-positive and has a very low blood count."

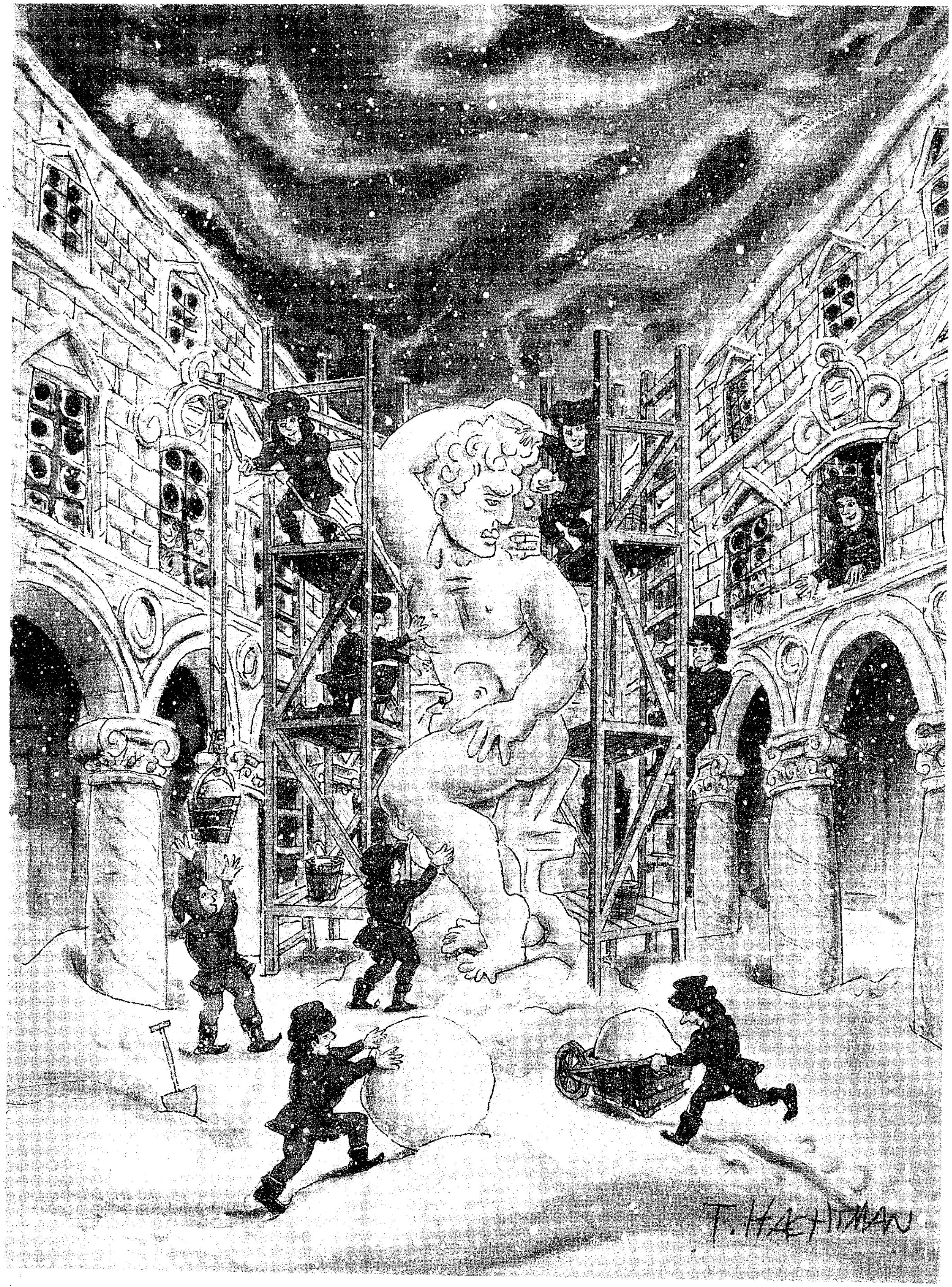
The judge asked Kaplan if he cared to speak.

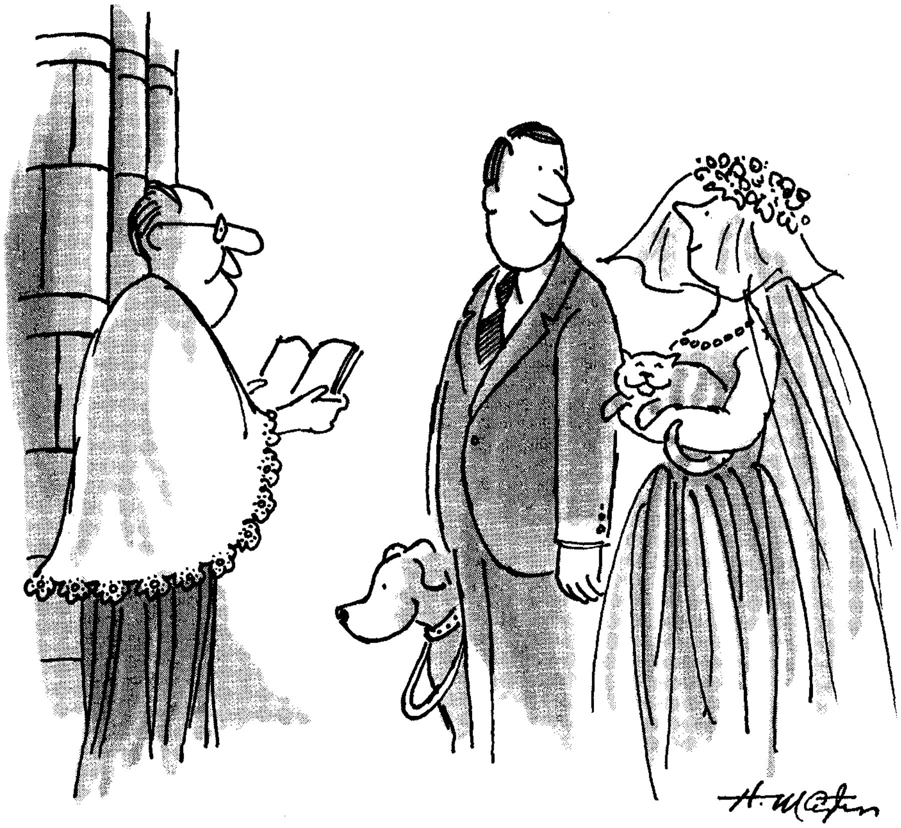
"I don't have anything to say," Kaplan mumbled.

Judge Berman drew himself up and pronounced Kaplan's crime "unprovoked" and "vicious." ("Too bad he didn't do it," Castellano whispered.) As the latest and most serious of a long string of crimes, the judge continued, this offense deserved to be "appropriately" punished. He was therefore sentencing Kaplan to five to ten years in prison.

The handcuffs went back on. Kaplan

THE LOST MICHELANGELO





"Do you, Edward and King, take Susan and Fluffy, to have and to hold . . ."

• •

turned and looked into Castellano's face, his expression more rueful than tragic, as he was led away.

Leaving the courtroom, I found myself in an elevator car with Castellano, who was wiping her eyes, and taking deep breaths. I introduced myself.

She stared at me. "I thought I recognized you," she said. She turned away. "Martin really got railroaded."

I asked what she meant.

"It wasn't a fair trial," she said. "I can't believe he got convicted. I was thinking about going to law school, but not after seeing this. Both my parents are lawyers. My sister's a lawyer."

We left the courthouse together, walking west. As we went on talking, I found that many of my (and the rest of the jury's) assumptions about Castellano were being rudely overturned. Both her parents were lawyers? I offered to explain how we had reached our verdict, and Castellano said she was interested. She listened closely, nodding, sighing, shaking her head, as we slowly walked through Tribeca and then caught the uptown I.R.T. at Franklin Street. "I understand," she said. "I understand. And Martin *is* a criminal. He really is. But he didn't do this. We *know* he didn't do it."

When Castellano rose to leave the train, at Thirty-fourth Street, I asked if we might talk again.

"Sure," she said, wearily, and she gave me her number.

NOW I knew why I had come back for Kaplan's sentencing. Serving on the jury had been gratifying in its way, but it had also been profoundly irritating. I wanted to learn more about the real story, the fuller, truer tale that we jurors, with a man's freedom hanging on our judgment, had been forced to guess at lamely.

I met Castellano for lunch in a noisy midtown bistro. (At her insistence, I have changed her name.) She seemed calm and cheerful, watchful, eager to please. She wore a black leather jacket and jeans, with a chain slung from one hip. Kaplan, she said, had been sent to a prison up on the Canadian border, and he was fiercely miserable there, as she learned again each time he called her, collect. She was back living with her parents, in Queens, still working at two jobs, and going full time to college, where she was majoring in Romance languages. I asked how many languages she spoke—I had noticed her ordering lunch from the French menu. "Five," she said. "But only three fluently. My Russian and my German have got pretty mediocre."

For what it was worth, my assumption during the trial, seemingly shared by the rest of the jury, had been that Castellano was from a working-class background, probably Dominican or Puerto Rican. Now it turned out that she was Chilean. (And I found myself wondering how many languages our jury's Alabama delegate, who had been so certain about the insular out-of-court identities of the alibi witnesses, spoke.) Her family had left Chile, Castellano said, shortly before Allende was overthrown, in 1973. Her parents both worked for international organizations, and the family had lived all over. Luciente had especially loved Kenya, where they had lived for two years. Her oldest sister, now a lawyer, had gone off to live with Masai cattle herders. "When she came back, she smelled like *smoke*." Castellano laughed. "And this Masai man who wanted to marry her came to see my father. He wanted to give us two cows for her." Castellano planned to start travelling again. She needed to finish school first, though. Also, she needed to support herself. That was why she was working at two jobs—one as a doctor's secretary, the other as a freelance translator for various government agencies. "I probably shouldn't talk about the translating, but it's really fun. They give me all these tapes of people who don't know they're being taped."

"Detective Lyons rides again."

Castellano grimaced. "What a shock, hearing I'd been taped."

I asked where she'd met Martin Kaplan.

"Washington Square Park," she said. She had been a young teen-ager, living on the Upper East Side, going to the United Nations International School, and had been drawn downtown by the punk scene of the early nineteen-eighties. Her crowd had followed bands like Agnostic Front and Murphy's Law, had hung out at clubs like the Rock Hotel, on Jane Street. "Most of the kids had, like, really permissive parents, who let them stay out all night. The others were runaways, living in abandoned buildings on the Lower East Side. My parents were pretty permissive, I guess. But we fought a *lot*." Castellano gave a pained little laugh at the memory. She had, I noticed, a tattoo running around her left wrist—what looked like a bracelet of thorns. "Martin was the tough kid," she went on. "The wild one. It's so corny when you think about it now, but we were just teen-agers, and everybody thought he was so cool. The girls really liked him, and we all followed him around. He was always the most daring kid: climbing buildings, climbing trees. He was a big showoff, really. He'd play tricks on people—sneak up and stick wet fingers in your ear. He was only about fourteen, but he was already living in abandoned buildings.

"But you know how people tell you the horror stories of their childhood, and you always have to take them with a grain of salt? Well, Martin was given up for adoption when he was born, and adopted by this Jewish couple out in the projects in Canarsie. Then, when he was seven, his mother flipped out on Valium, so they put Martin in the Infants Home of Brooklyn, which was run by the Jewish Board of Guardians, for, like, four years. He started getting into trouble. In fact, his father used to send him out to steal things. There's a picture of him and Martin with a car that Martin stole when he was twelve. Finally, Martin's mother left, and his father had to move across the hall to live with this old man, and they didn't want Martin around. So he's been on his own, basically, since he was really young. I've actually *heard* his father say, 'I never wanted you. Your mother wanted you, and now she's gone, so why don't you get lost.' I couldn't believe he would say that in front of me. We were seventeen at the time. Have you ever been to Canarsie? It's like out on these docks, in a swamp, way out past the end of the L line. Martin's father is in a nursing home now, in Brooklyn. He had both his legs amputated. Anyway, Martin never even got to high school. He was always broke, always hungry, never had a place to live. He used to help other kids, though. Runaways. Especially girls." Castellano laughed lightly. "He used to live off girls—N.Y.U. students, F.I.T. students."

What about drugs?

"These old hippies used to give us acid," Castellano said. "It was a really bad thing to do, I realize now, but they did it. And everybody smoked pot, of course." Cocaine and heroin came along later, she said.

Did Martin become a drug dealer?

"Martin?" Castellano looked amused. "No. He's too irresponsible. Drug dealing takes responsibility."

Agnifilo, I thought, had apparently given Kaplan too much credit.

Martin did become an addict, however, Castellano said, and after he and she became romantically involved, when they were seventeen, she became an addict, too. Eventually, she began living with him in abandoned buildings. "Horrible squats. One on Ninth Street. Another one on Eighth Street. People used to steal electricity from an outlet in the street. They used to tap into the telephone lines, and the runaways would make long-distance calls to their parents. I used to see my parents sometimes, and they were desperate about what I was doing, but they couldn't do much. They used to really hate Martin." Kaplan had by then found his vocation—breaking into cars—and was constantly being arrested. He twice spent a year in jail. Finally, after five years together, Castellano left him. She was twenty-two. She entered drug rehab, got a job and an apartment, and started college.

"But somehow Martin and I stayed friends, even though we broke up, ah, nonamicably," she said. "I left because of drugs, and because he was using needles, and wouldn't stop—I never used needles—but I felt like I still had to take care of him. Martin can't take care of himself. He gets girls to take care of him."

Like Leah Tagliaferri?

"Exactly. Leah was a college girl, going to Hunter, living in an apartment paid for by her parents. I felt sorry for her. People warned her about Martin. But she was like a typical case in a self-help book: 'Leah, a woman who loved too much, and believed that he would change.' Martin *couldn't* change. He didn't know anything else. Also, he's too self-destructive. So he just lived off her, always getting high, disappearing for days—the same old thing. And she just used to stand on the corner, literally, waiting for him. People used to imitate her: 'This is Leah.' " Castellano let her arms fall to her sides and made a hangdog face, looking forlornly from side to side. "That's why I felt sorry for her. But she and I were never friends. She felt threatened by me, even though Martin and I had broken up at least a year before they met."

I recalled that during the trial the prosecutor had seemed extravagantly surprised and skeptical when Tagliaferri said that she and Castellano were not really friends. Were they, perhaps, trying to hide the fact, he seemed to wonder, that they had cooked up their

"I did a 'Kojak,' two 'McCloud's, and some voice-overs. Right now, I'm doing my laundry."

little alibi story together? Some members of the jury had thought that it was a ridiculous ruse, too—their pretending not to be friends—and that it had damaged their credibility.

I asked about Tagliaferri's mother. Was she, by any chance, into drugs?

"No! She's just a regular mom!" Again, Castellano seemed to find my question amusing. She grinned and then guffawed. "I do think she's got some psychological problems, though, that she needs to work on. I mean, she's so co-dependent it's unbelievable. She just attaches herself to people. Like Martin. He lived with them for a while. *My* mother would have had him arrested if he'd done to me what he did to Leah. He never even told Leah he was H.I.V.-positive—and he denied it after somebody else told her. But Leah's mom still bailed him out of jail, and she went to his trial every day. She still talks to him on the phone from jail. I mean, it's nice of her, but . . ."

What did her own parents think about Kaplan now?

Castellano shrugged. "They accept that he's part of my life. I mean, they hope I'll get over him. But there's nothing to get over. He's my friend. They don't know I testified at his trial. And, to tell you the truth, I would *really* have preferred not to. I just couldn't avoid it. It was my obligation. I *had* to do it."

I asked about her bracelet-of-thorns tattoo—probably not, I guessed, her parents' favorite sight—and said that at Kaplan's sentencing I had noticed something similar around his wrist.

"Actually, the one on Martin's wrist is skulls. But he got a tattoo like mine on his upper arm the same day I got this."

Castellano's current boyfriend, who was also probably not delighted about the tattoo she shared with Kaplan, was a musician and writer (and former friend of Kaplan's). She told me that he filled notebooks with poems and stories that she and her sister thought were fantastic but he refused to try to publish. "He should have lived in the eighteenth century," she said, laughing and blushing bright red.

Castellano was curious about the eyewitness descriptions of Kaplan that had convinced the jury of his guilt. I said that they had been only slightly more detailed than the descriptions of his companions.

"Companions?"

It seemed that she had never heard—or had forgotten—that there were three attackers. She pushed her plate away. "Now I'm absolutely positive," she said finally. "There *weren't* two other guys around that night. And who would hang out with Martin, anyway? It's not like he has a *crew*, or anything." She shook her head and sighed. "On the other hand, it never made sense that Martin would do a mugging alone, either. I mean, he's a wimp. Most junkies are. Mugging takes courage. Martin breaks into cars. It's easy, it's safe. He can *look* intimidating, especially after he's been in jail, but he's not violent. He runs away from fights. Once, this Puerto Rican couple tried to mug us. They had baseball bats, and everything. And Martin just *ran*. And the people were so surprised, to see him leave me standing there, that I had time to get away, too. You know, I thought about saying in court what I really thought—that Martin's a wimp. But Martin would have been really mad. So I didn't. Anyway, they never asked my opinion. They just wanted facts. And then they didn't believe us."

I tried to explain that it had been possible to convict Kaplan without first concluding that she and Tagliaferri had deliberately lied. But the truth was that most of my fellow-jurors had thought they were lying.

As we left the restaurant, I asked Castellano to ask Kaplan, the next time they spoke, to call me. She looked uncomfortable. "I'll ask him," she said. "But I told him I was coming to see you, and you don't want to know what he said."

"What did he say?"

"Well . . . he said, 'Fuck that reporter.' He's just angry, you know. Angry at the world."

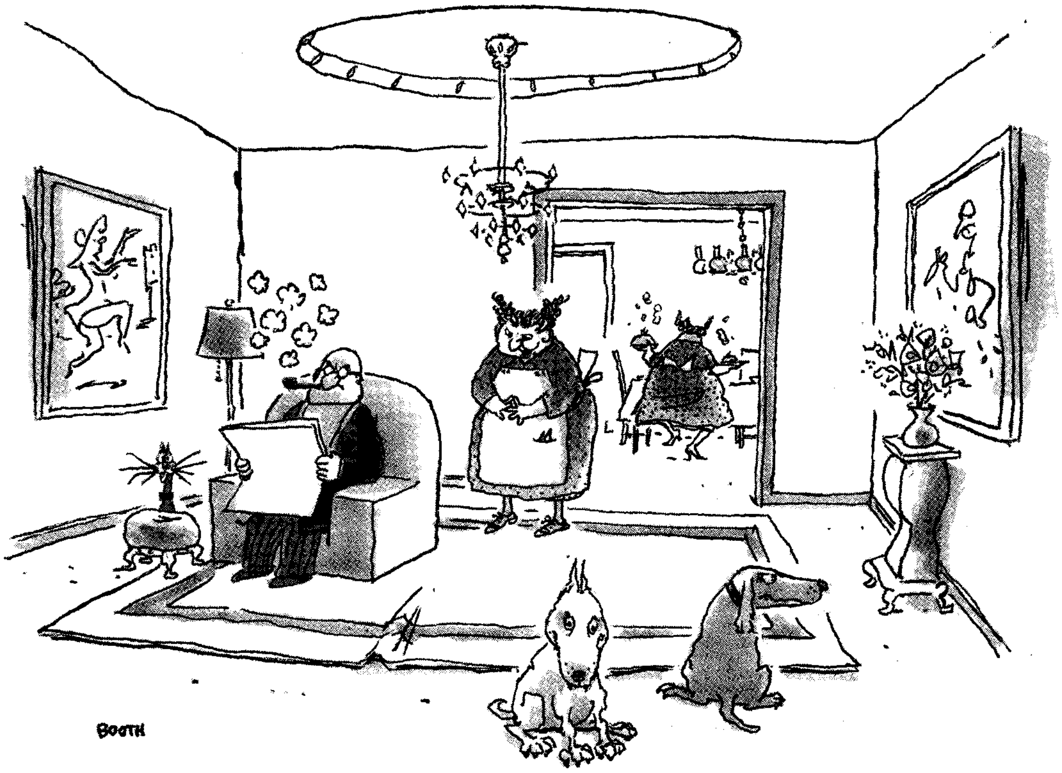
THINGS weren't getting any clearer, but the picture was at least filling in. I got a transcript of Kaplan's trial—at six hundred and eighty pages, it was three inches thick—and, unexpectedly, the picture congealed some more. Much of the expurgation of the story that the jury heard had occurred, I discovered, in open court, during the various "colloquies" that took place while we were banished to the jury room. The fact that Kaplan had been arrested on a new charge while he was awaiting trial, for example, had been discussed during a break in Leah Tagliaferri's testimony. The judge had at that point come up with a description, acceptable to both lawyers, of Kaplan's bail situation which would not reveal the rearrest; and, upon our return, he had smoothly laid it on us.

Later, with Detective Lyons on the stand, we had been abruptly sent out after Lyons mentioned that a relative of his was a former cocaine addict. In the colloquy that followed, with Jerald Rosenthal repeatedly asking for (and being denied) a mistrial, the judge declared himself determined to find some way, in his words, "to clear up any possible thought in the jury's mind that Mr. Kaplan is a drug addict." Since Lyons had actually been making an oblique reference to Luciente Castellano's drug problem, not Kaplan's, the judge decided to tell us when we returned that the discussion between Lyons and Castellano had been about drug problems in their respective families, thus removing the inference farther from Kaplan. Rosenthal, while noting that "we are doing a deception on the jury"—Judge Berman disputed this description, but it was clearly accurate—had no objection. And again we were glibly gulled.

The colloquies contained some odd gems, including vintage weird riffs by Rosenthal. On, for instance, the secret taping of Castellano by Lyons: "It's a gratuitous act on his part which to me is a violation of everything that we hold sacred on our privacy and everything else." Judge Berman seemed to feel less compunction about rebuking Rosenthal during colloquies than he did in front of the jury, at one point exclaiming, "You get so carried away with your own voice and speech that you are not aware I am about to grant you what you request."

But the gist of the colloquies revolved around a powerful irony, which, I now realized, had suffused the entire trial. The great care taken to exclude certain matters from evidence had but one purpose: to protect the rights of the accused. Everyone, starting with the judge, had been intent on providing Martin Kaplan a fair trial. And yet the net effect had been to weaken his case. At least, I found that his alibi, once the judicial veils were removed, and Kaplan and his world were shown in far more detail (however sordid), was only getting stronger. Castellano had been credible as a witness, I thought, and she was even more so off the stand.

LEAH TAGLIAFERRI, it turned out, had also thought about saying in court something different, something more candid, than what she had said. "Maybe I should have just got up there and said, 'Martin's a junkie,' " she told me. "Said, 'His hands were bloody when they stopped him because he'd been shooting up in his wrists. He couldn't have beat up anybody if he wanted to—he was too high. Anyway, Martin does cars. He doesn't rob *people*. He knows that's a felony. He's not stupid. He makes a living from cars, and he's a creature of habit. He does the same cars on the same streets, every night. Plus, nobody from the neighborhood would try that shit at Astor Place, because the station is crawling with plainclothes cops. You jump a turnstile there, they'll get you. So there's no way Martin could have done it.' Maybe that would have worked better."



"Mama and I fixed a lovely dinner. I used the right side of my brain, and she used the left side of her brain."

Tagliaferri seemed to believe, however, that in the end no defense could have succeeded. Why? "Because that jury had no brain," she told me. "All they had to do was look at the evidence. It was *impossible* that Martin could have done it. But they were just too stupid. They wanted to convict him from the first time they saw him. 'Street punk? He must have done it.' "

We were sitting in Tagliaferri's horse-drawn carriage, a graceful maroon-colored landau, on Central Park South. It was a raw December night, and she had spread a heavy blanket over our knees. She wore a head scarf against the cold, and a nose ring that I hadn't noticed in court (had she removed it for the occasion?) now glinted in the street light. The well-mannered suburbanite from the courtroom seemed, indeed, quite transformed by a pugnacious, vaguely Cockney charm. At the same time, Luciente Castellano's depiction of Tagliaferri as a lovelorn doormat seemed suddenly way off the mark—the wishful putdown, perhaps, of a romantic rival. I had surprised Tagliaferri earlier, picking her out of a group of drivers talking near their carriages. She hadn't recognized me from the trial, and her wariness had only increased after I introduced myself. But she had slowly warmed to her subject, and now she seemed entirely unconcerned that I might take personally her low opinion of my intelligence as a juror.

I asked about her relationship with Kaplan.

"The first time I saw him was years ago, at the Lismar Lounge, on First Avenue," she said. "He was dressed like the Road Warrior. Black leather, boots, with, like, a Mohawk. I said to my friend, 'Who is that? He's *hot*.' He was with this girl, though—Lucy." Tagliaferri pronounced "Lucy" with exaggerated disdain. She and Kaplan finally met, she said, in 1991, when she came home one day and found him, courtesy of her then roommate, asleep in her bed. They took up with each other, but, as she soon discovered, "Martin was a *terrible* boyfriend." She explained, "He was always disappearing, always strung out, getting arrested. He wasn't a womanizer—I just could never count on him. So I used to be *mean* to him. But, the whole year we lived together, Martin never said a mean thing back to me. I'd be yelling at him, and he'd just say, 'Come on, don't be like that.' Because Martin is a truly sweet person. I've never seen him be violent. Which is another reason he couldn't have done this robbery."

Did she, too, get into drugs?

"No. Martin wouldn't even let me see him buy drugs. He didn't want me to smoke pot. He didn't even want me to *drink*."

What about his H.I.V. status?

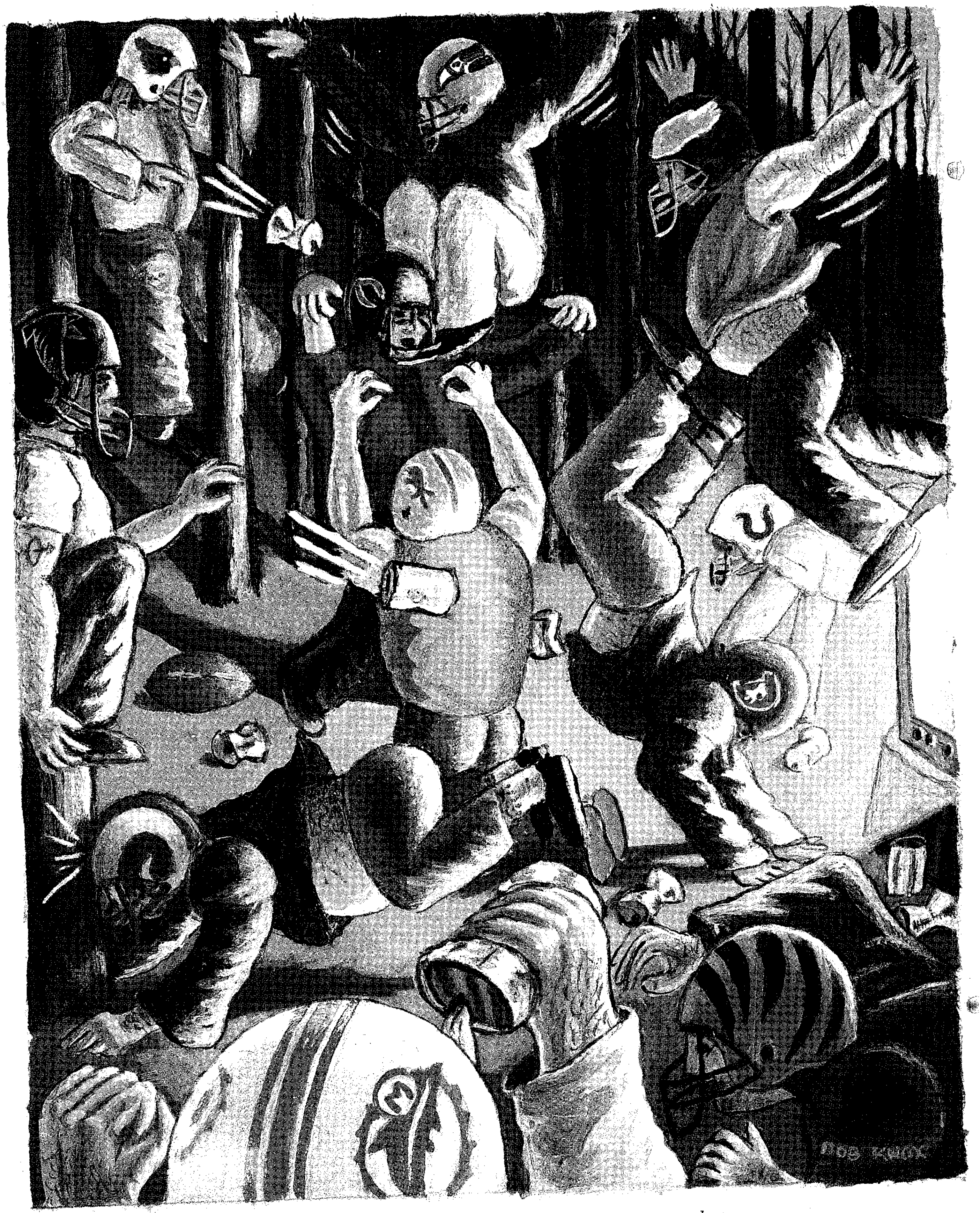
"I don't know he's H.I.V.-positive," Tagliaferri said tightly. "I know I'm not. And my new boyfriend's not."

Kaplan's attempts to kick his heroin addiction had all been doomed by his circumstances, Tagliaferri recalled, her voice bitter. "Somebody like Lucy, she had her family to fall back on when she wanted to clean up," she said. "But Martin has nobody. He got into a methadone program once, and when they found out he was homeless they just kicked him out. Before he was even detoxed. Have you ever been around somebody that's trying to kick? The smell is *horrible*. It comes out through their skin. We used to spend whole days sitting in the welfare office, trying to get Martin on welfare. You'd sit there the whole fucking day, then they'd tell you, 'Come back tomorrow.' "

Once, Tagliaferri said, she took Kaplan upstate. "My cousins live up near Kingston, and every summer they have this thing they call the Swampathon. They live next to a swamp, and they have like a big party, and everybody has to run through the swamp. It's really gross, really fun. Mar-

"GRIDIRON JOHN" MEN'S CLUB, SUPER SUNDAY

BY BOB KNOX



Gathered around the warm glow of the TV, club members enact the pre-game ritual of getting in touch with the animal within.

tin didn't want to go, but I told him there was no *way* I wasn't going upstate. So he came, too, and he had *so much fun*. He did the Swampathon. He rode a pony. He raced go-carts. He climbed a tree to get a snake that was up there. And he was like 'Leah, let's just stay here. Not go back to the city.' I've never seen Martin so happy."

Had Kaplan ever been gainfully employed?

"He was a bicycle messenger, before I met him. And he was a roofer down in Florida once, when he was a teen-ager. And a dishwasher. That's about it. I tried to get him on here at the carriages. He got dressed up, in a nice shirt, and everything. But the guy I was working for then wouldn't hire him. He said he looked too intimidating. He was a real prick, that guy.

"But the worst part of this job right now," she went on, "is this little fat fuck from the A.S.P.C.A. running around out here writing tickets. Five people in your carriage? Boom, five-hundred-dollar fine. A couple of times, the animal-rights people were out here, spraying drivers with Mace. Can you believe that? What assholes!"

The subject of animal-rights activists got Tagliaferri started on "political correctness," which had plagued Hunter College, she said, and had ultimately caused her to drop out.

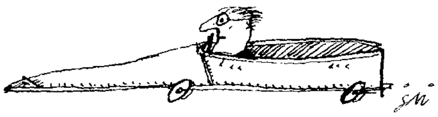
Her current boyfriend, she said, was also a carriage driver. "He's, like, the complete opposite of Martin," she said. "He's really clean. Doesn't drink or smoke or do drugs. Can't go to bars, because he has asthma. Drinks fruit juice, and this protein stuff. He works out." Tagliaferri rolled her eyes as she said "works out." I gathered that physical fitness didn't rate much higher with her than political correctness did. "He's in Ireland right now," she said. "I just got back from there."

The conversation turned back to Kaplan, sitting in prison far upstate. "There's *nothing* up there," Tagliaferri said. "Nobody to talk to. Nothing to do. I want to go visit him, but my boyfriend wouldn't like it. Also, it's, like, ten hours on the bus, overnight, and it's a really cold ride, I heard. Plus, the visits are for six hours. And, I mean, what's there to talk about for six hours? Martin's always saying, 'My life's not worth living.' And I never tell him it's true, of course." Tagliaferri stamped her boots against the cold, which had long since robbed my feet of all feeling. "It was different when he was in Riker's, or the Tombs," she said. "It was easy to visit him, take him things. Books. He loves to read." I remembered Castellano telling me that Kaplan liked Edgar Allan Poe. "Martin's artistic," Tagliaferri said. "He made me these carvings out of soap when he was in Riker's. They were really good. One was a picture frame, with a skull and crossbones. Another one he made from two bars of soap. It was a coffin, with a skeleton inside."

The many short sentences Kaplan had served in local jails had all been the upshots of plea-bargain agreements. His being sent upstate for a long stretch now was, Tagliaferri knew, a direct result of his refusal to follow the usual procedure. "They tried to get him to cop out, to take a sentence of two to four years," she said. "But I told him, 'That's getting pretty low, when they can make you cop out to something you didn't even do.' That's why Martin wouldn't go along. His first lawyer, Armstrong, didn't want it to go to trial. The prosecutor didn't want it to go to trial. Armstrong thought we would lose and Martin would get more time. And he was right. But we never thought they could railroad him the way they did."

A car backfired, and Tagliaferri sprang from the carriage bellowing, in a surprisingly deep voice, "Hercules! Hercules!" She ran toward a muscular horse behind us, which had spooked and was pulling a driverless carriage up onto the sidewalk. Tagliaferri caught his reins, led him back to the street, and tied him firmly to a grate. She checked the line ahead of us before she climbed back in her carriage. "Unbelievable," she muttered. "I'm going to end up making a total of one trip tonight." She lapsed into a disgruntled silence.

When she spoke again, her voice was querulous, almost angry. "You know, my mother, who watched the whole trial, said something funny was definitely going on in there. Like, she said that all three of the witnesses against Martin were just lying sacks of shit. I mean, what is this bullshit about one of the so-called victims trying to shake hands with these three guys who want to kick his ass? When was the last time you saw that happen? And who were these two other guys Martin supposedly had with him, these phantoms? Why did the cops never try to find them? My mother said she thought the whole thing might have been a drug deal gone bad. Or else these guys just got in a fight and lost and wanted to cover it up."



I bit back an impulse to ridicule this interpretation of the trial—I was a reporter now, I reminded myself—and instead asked Tagliaferri about her mother's background. "She used to be a ticket agent for Pan Am," she said. "So we used to fly all over for free. She lost her job when Pan Am got bought by Delta. So she's got an age-discrimination lawsuit against Delta. And a class-action suit against them, too. My stepfather was a fireman. He just retired. They're talking about moving to France for a year with my half sister."

We sank into silence again. Eventually, Tagliaferri piped up, "You know, Martin is going to be mad at me for blabbing to you. Whenever he used to disappear, and I'd go around asking people if they'd seen him, he'd show up eventually and hear about it, and get all mad. 'Everybody on the whole Lower East Side knows my business now! I don't want you telling people my business!' "

Tagliaferri used a huffy Brooklyn whine to imitate Kaplan, and I realized that I had heard him say only a very few words.

"But it's *scary*," she said suddenly. "Don't you think?"

"What?"

"How a couple of rich yuppies from the Upper East Side can just say you did something, and, even if you didn't, that's it—you go to jail. For five to ten years!"

I remembered something Castellano had told me. "Leah and I had this joke going at the trial," she said. "We were like 'They don't have twelve junkies sitting on that jury, so they don't know what's going on.' That's why I don't believe in the jury system. Somebody's fate shouldn't be decided by a bunch of people who aren't trained in the law. They should be professionals." While the idea of twelve professional junkies sitting in judgment on their peers had been more surreal than compelling, Tagliaferri's contention that class prejudice had been crucial to Kaplan's conviction—a bourgeois jury identifying with bourgeois victims, and being relatively deaf to the arguments of street scufflers—was less easily dismissed.

I didn't know what to say. So I tried to reassure Tagliaferri that she wasn't the only friend of Kaplan's who had talked to me.

"Oh, but Lucy's weird, don't you think?" she said. I didn't reply, and she

SIXTH SENSE

Something told him she was near. In the same room,
Even. Wearing the blue polka-dot dress he'd given her,
With the pearl choker and the sapphire earrings,
Holding a Kir Royale. He looked at her left hand.
No ring. And knew he had to get out of there
Fast, before one of them did something irrevocable,
Like the time she slapped his face in the bus
And he wasn't sure why, or the day they stood
In front of the dress-shop window, and when
She said she liked the yellow kimono he went
And bought it on the spot. What an amazing day
That was. Everyone he met that day was someone
He had known before, a decade ago or more,
And the statue of Alice the gigantic girl
In Central Park turned out to be his sister
When they were small. Mama was in the kitchen
Waiting for the phone to ring, and Daddy was still
On the road, checking the rearview mirror
In the old green Chevrolet, when the hurricane hit.
One of the other men drowned that night, but Daddy
Came back safely, with gifts for all the kids
If they agreed to go to sleep and dream of him.

—David Lehman

widened her eyes and tilted her head in an imitation of Castellano. "I mean, it was good of her to come and testify," Tagliaferri said. "But I don't trust her. I think she's catty. All women are. They talk about you whenever your back's turned. That's why I don't like women. I have hardly any women friends."

I didn't tell Tagliaferri that her theory of female character had been shared by some of my fellow-jurors, and that the theory had helped send Kaplan up the river. Instead, I said that I had to go home—it was past midnight—and climbed down from the carriage. Talking to Tagliaferri had left me feeling like a character in a nineteenth-century novel—Inspector Bucket, perhaps, from "Bleak House," but more classbound. She, meanwhile, was the fiery, intelligent, undereducated working lass, her general sense of grievance sharpened by the injustice she saw being done to her beloved Kaplan. As we stretched our legs and said good night, I gave Tagliaferri my number and asked her to have Kaplan call me collect. She said she doubted he would, but she would try. Then, as I turned to leave, she cocked her head, put an index finger to her cheek, and said, mock-coyly, "So, was it better than talking with Lucy?"

I wondered how many times she must have asked Kaplan a version of the same question.

I CALLED Mrs. Tagliaferri, and asked why she had been so interested in Kaplan's trial.

"I wanted to give Martin moral support," she said. "Who was there for him? How would you like to be on trial, and nobody showing up in court for you? I felt terrible for him, seeing that courtroom. I hadn't seen Martin for almost a year, and I didn't know what was going on with him, but I brought a bag of clothing for him every day, just in case he showed up. And then I got interested in the trial. I got nosy. There was something phony about that trial. My feeling was: this was not a robbery. It was either a fight or they were there buying drugs. The one guy was Wall Street, which is very heavy cocaine use. The other guy was a bartender. Out here in Long Beach, a lot of the bartenders are involved."

In fact, among her greatest fears, Mrs. Tagliaferri said, was that one of her children would become a drug addict. "I was very worried that Leah would get into drugs, or some kind of trouble," she said. "And when Leah first brought Martin home I did not know he was a drug addict. If I had known, I might not have let him stay here. It wasn't obvious. But, you see, she had brought another guy home with her once. His mother had thrown him out. And we let him stay here, and he got his G.E.D., and we really straightened him out. He's in college now, doing fine. So we trusted Leah's judgment—that she wouldn't bring home anybody who wasn't a decent person. So I put Martin in for a G.E.D., too. But his concentration was about five minutes. We were trying to teach him fractions. He's very smart. He just couldn't concentrate.

"Then we found out he was a drug addict, and I was horrified. I was afraid for my daughter. One thing I know about drug addicts is that they try to get other people to use drugs. Luckily, Martin wasn't like that. He's really a very nice person. The drugs just got in the way. If he wasn't using drugs, he'd be perfectly fine. I was never, ever afraid of him. He never stole from me—that's another thing addicts usually do. All he did was eat. He was eating me out of house and home!" Mrs. Tagliaferri laughed. "He'd eat anything. One night, he ate a box of dried stuffing."

I could hear Leah guffawing in the background.

"He stayed with us for about a year," her mother went on. "My seven-year-old daughter liked him. He was good with her. But I asked him to leave in May, because by then I knew he was on drugs, and that I wasn't helping him by letting him stay here. I was just making it easy for him. He wasn't doing anything for himself. He wasn't looking for a job. He was causing friction in the house. My husband wasn't happy. So Martin left, and went back to the city. Back to squatting. Then Leah went, and was staying with him, and I was very worried, so I went looking for her. We convinced Martin to go into drug treatment, at St. Barnabas Hospital, in the Bronx. We arranged it through some group in Grand Central. We took a taxi up to the Bronx, and then it took all day to get Martin admitted. They didn't want to take him, because he fell asleep and when they woke him up he was disoriented, and they thought he was psycho. But we finally got him in, for five days of detox. After that, we took him to Odyssey, in the East Village. But it turned out that he really hadn't detoxed long enough, so it didn't work. And that was the last time I saw Martin. That was, oh, eighteen months ago, at least."

Mrs. Tagliaferri paused, and Leah, who had been tossing in comments throughout this account, was also silent. "It's a ruined life," Mrs. Tagliaferri said softly. "And you look at this guy and say, 'He really could've *been* something.' And I think, if he changes his mind, he still could be. He still calls here. I talk to him. I yell at him. I tell him to straighten out."

A FEW days after my conversation with Leah, Martin Kaplan surprised me with a collect call. His voice sounded just like her imitation of him.

"I got two things to say," he said. "First, I wasn't guilty of doing this. Second, I was stuck in the system from Monday onward. I only missed two days on my own."

I couldn't recall offhand where Monday had fallen in the trial, so I asked why he had been absent to begin with.

"I was strung out," he said.

There was a rising clatter in the background, then shouting. "Hold on," Kaplan said. "There's gonna be a count."

A soundtrack from Pandemonium filled the phone for several minutes while I jotted down questions.

When Kaplan returned, I had him confirm the details of his background as I had heard them from his ex-girlfriends. (He agreed that his father had sent him out to steal when he was a child; however, his father, when I reached him by telephone, denied that he had ever approved Martin's stealing.) Then he resumed his *mea exculpa*, echoing both the alibi that had been offered in court and the more nuanced version I had heard since. "I walked out of San Loco, I'm standing there, and the cops pull up in an unmarked car and throw me against the car," he said. "My entire record is for stealing cars. I don't mug people."

So why did the victims and the eyewitness identify him?

"They didn't," he said. "Not at first. It was only after we'd been at the station for two and a half hours. The cops were talking to them in the back room the whole time, and then they came out and looked at me in the cage and said I was the one. I only saw them for a couple of seconds. But if you ever talk to them I wish you'd ask them if they *really* think it was me, and if the cops didn't coerce them. I mean, they looked like young, decent guys, could be in college. They were pretty lumped up, but they didn't seem like bad guys. Not enough to deserve the beating they caught. It's something you see a lot in the East Village, though. Hang around, you see a couple of those a night. Just another bashing."

Kaplan had the voice, I thought, of someone who had been on the receiving end of more than his share of bashings. But he also had a casual, palooka authority.

"I've heard of people being picked up for things they didn't do before," he went on. "But nothing as serious as this. Of course, I'm the only fool who ever took it to trial. I shoulda taken the two-to-four, because I coulda done that standing on my head, and I'd be home now. But I'm just not gonna cop out to stuff that I haven't done."

On a hunch, I asked about the flashlight.

"You heard about that?" Kaplan seemed amused. "Yeah, I was trying to sell it. It— I guess I can't get in trouble for it now. It came out of a car. I wanted to do a nickel of coke, and I was trying to sell it for two dollars. But that's the biggest joke of all. The cops said I just robbed this guy of sixty bucks, and here I am with no money, trying to scrape up five bucks."

Perhaps his accomplices had taken off with the sixty, I thought, without much conviction. I asked Kaplan what the police had offered him in exchange for his help in finding the other attackers.

"They never mentioned 'em," he said. "You don't understand. It was obvious to the cops that I wasn't there."

What about his bleeding hands?

"There was blood running down my left arm when I was arrested," he said. "There was an abscess on my arm where I had been sticking a needle in it. The paramedics took a look at it. It was obvious where the blood was coming from. I had some little cuts and abrasions on my hands, but on my fingertips, not on my knuckles. Those were from messing with car locks and stuff, undoing bolts on radios with my fingers. I always had those cuts, because I didn't have tools. The cops took pic-

"You know what I think, babe? Seven on the Richter scale."

tures of my hands. Didn't you see them?"

No, I said, we hadn't seen them. I asked about his health.

"It's O.K.," he said. "You mean the H.I.V. thing? I don't think I'm positive. I wasn't actually tested at any point in time. My lawyer said I had it at my sentencing, but that was just, like, a last-ditch bid to get my time down. They tested me in here. I'm waiting for a result now."

I wished him luck with the test results.

"I'll be O.K.," he said evenly. "I never used too many dirty needles. I've always come up negative before."

I didn't point out that he had just told me, less than a minute earlier, that he had never been tested previously for H.I.V.

The time permitted for an inmate's call was running out. Kaplan urged me to relay to Solder and Leamy his questions about their identification of him. "You have a good Christmas," he said in parting.

I mumbled something similar as the line went dead.

EVEN after allowing for the excellent possibility that I was being conned, I was now quite rattled. I called Detective Lyons, who had conducted the police investigation, and asked whether Kaplan had ever been asked about his accomplices. Not that he knew of, he said. "See, what the D.A. tries to do is clear the calendar, not add to it," he said. "Of course, I never dealt directly with Kaplan. Once he has a lawyer, it's pointless." Lyons had shown John Solder mug shots of "guys from that area with that m.o.," he said. "But I woulda had a better chance if I coulda talked to the guy in California. He was better at I.D."

The only reason he even got involved with the case, Lyons added, was that the defense was planning to present an alibi. "And they had two decent-looking girls. If I was in the jury, I would've acquitted him, because of the reasonable doubt. So that's why I went out to talk to them—to try to tie them to a story that they can't change later. That way, it's my word against hers. And if you believe her and not me, you're going to acquit. That's why integrity is so important. It's all I really got at that point."

Another thing Lyons had, and mentioned to me, was his "success rate," or "clearance rate." "Detectives are graded on their success rate, and the powers that be consider a ten-per-cent clearance rate good," he said. "I don't."

I wondered if I was supposed to congratulate Lyons on his success in the Kaplan case. I didn't.

I called Solder and Leamy. Solder on the phone was much as he had been in court, expressing a rather detached satisfaction that "some part of the system in New York actually worked," and saying that "determining guilt or innocence was secondary" (I assumed he meant that his primary goal was to see justice done, not Kaplan convicted), while declining to elaborate much on his testimony.

Leamy, on the other hand, was vastly more vehement and dramatic than the witness we had heard. "I'm a tough son of a bitch," he said. "But did you see those boots? Weren't they murderous? I caught some serious blows. I can't believe to this day that I didn't lose an eye, or something. I'm not on a vendetta—if you knew me, you'd know that I don't want to be responsible for putting anybody in jail—but this guy is an evil son of a bitch. I mean, the scumbag from Hell. I didn't want to go back and testify. I didn't want to face him again. I've had to deal with that pride aspect, see. I feel shame that I was wounded by some dooky character like himself. I mean, one on one, come *on*, baby. But I was whamboozled. Bushwhacked. Ambushed."

Rock music and loud voices rose and fell behind Leamy in the San Francisco bar where he worked. I asked him about the identification process.

"When we found him on the street, I was dead set," he said. "Some things register in your soul. Like when someone tries to murder your ass. I *knew* that motherfucker. And I went up to him in the cage there, next to the desk, in the station, and he was in there, behind those solid, steely-eyed bars, and I said, 'I will remember you.' I'm an artist. I notice things."

Had the police said anything to him and Solder about Kaplan?

"The cops said absolutely nothing to me about Kaplan," he said. "Except that he was a junkie and had a rap sheet and they weren't surprised he was there."

In saying "absolutely nothing," I thought, the police had said a mouthful, including everything they should not have said. And Leamy, for all his attention to detail, clearly had a passion to avenge the beating he had received. Like the news of Lyons' devotion to his "success rate," these were not reassuring revelations.

Solder had also mentioned that the police had told him, in the station that night, "We've seen this guy before." But when I phoned him back he changed his story, denying that the police had said anything to him about Kaplan. And any doubts that he might have had about Kaplan being one of the attackers, he said—doubts perhaps raised in the course of preparing for the trial, "because the D.A. just keeps asking you, and you have to ask yourself, 'Am I absolutely sure?' "—had been resolved before he testified, he said, his voice now grim and defensive.

I asked Leamy who had told him that Kaplan was a junkie. He said that it had been Officer Ungro, who, he added, had done a wonderful job that night. " 'Dedicated' is the word I would use."

I called William Ungro. He said he had never seen Kaplan before that night, and had had no idea who he was. I asked if he had taken any photographs of Kaplan's hands after his arrest. "Yeah, I did," he said. "But they didn't come out too good."

What was wrong with them?

"You couldn't really see the blood," he said.

A FEW nights later, I had a dream. A dark, sticky substance coated my hands and arms. I had been making liquor—or some sort of drug, or dessert—with the stuff, and now I was trying to wash it off under a tap. But it just got thicker and stickier. I was in a little house in the country, and I began to hear, above the sound of the water, Caroline screaming somewhere outside. I had been planning to go look for her after washing up. She had stumbled off earlier, looking for something in the woods. I rushed outside, unable to tell which direction the screaming was coming from. Panic filled my throat, and I woke up.

Lying in the dark, trying to calm down, I saw, in my mind's eye, Martin Kaplan's ravaged arms and bloody hands. The image was drenched with horror, and it was not the simple horror of a gory sight. It was moral horror—the now distinct possibility that we had put Kaplan in prison for something he did not do. The comfortable gulf between juror and accused, journalist and subject, cheerful audience and characters in torment had suddenly filled with ordinary sympathy, and even this referred distress was shockingly intense.

I WENT to the District Attorney's office. Marc Agnifilo, I was told, was not permitted to talk to me now that I was press. The public-information officer who could talk to me was polite but could answer virtually none of my questions. She did get copies of the two tape recordings that had been played during Kaplan's trial but had not appeared in the trial transcript—Carroll Wilder's 911 call and Lyons' interview with Luciente Castellano—and she let me listen to them in a corner of her office.

The 911 call was as I remembered it: chaotic, upsetting, not very informative.

Lyons' tape was another matter. I played it loud and slow, and was able to make out many bits that had been inaudible in the courtroom. I also played it right through passages that had been excised from the evidence version. The public-information officer had instructions to prevent me from hearing those passages, but it was easy to slip them past her. I was no longer a juror, and I felt justified in trying to learn whatever I could. And what I learned was that Lyons had gone considerably farther in his efforts to confuse and intimidate Castellano than the jury had been allowed to hear. The tension between them, and his relentlessness, were far more palpable with the volume turned up and with sections replayed. What had sounded like background noise and sociable chuckling by Castellano now emerged as a series of nervous, ingratiating, desperate moans, more like sobbing than like laughter. Several times, she had tried, very timidly and politely, to end the interview, and had been ignored.

The passages that had been excised were those in which Lyons talked about his relative being a former cocaine addict. The reason for bringing up Castellano's drug problem, Lyons had explained to the judge during one of the colloquies we didn't hear, had been merely to establish some common ground with her. On the tape, however, it was painfully clear that he had also brought up the subject of her struggle with addiction to scare her. "You've come a long way, Lucy," Lyons said avuncularly. "I don't know. Sometimes people fall back. I don't know if you have or not."

"No, I haven't," Castellano said, laughing miserably.

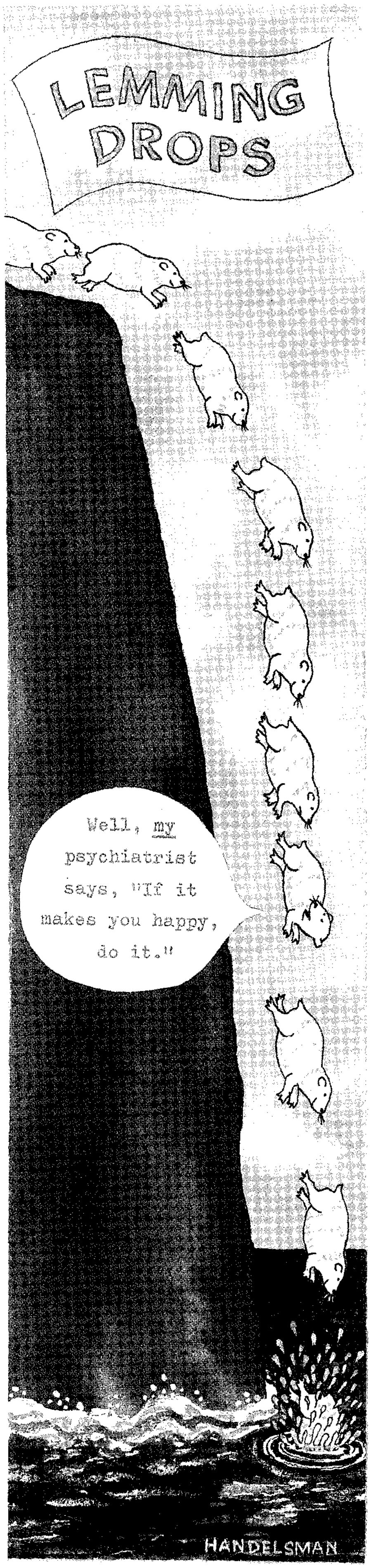
In a breathtaking gambit, Lyons turned Castellano's decision to testify into a failure in her recovery from heroin. "I don't know what you do as far as the steps," he said, referring to the standard twelve-step recovery program. "But with my [relative] . . . there are certain steps. And I don't think [testifying] is part of the steps. You know what I'm saying? And you know it's not, either."

When Castellano, in the face of repeated threats that she would be charged with perjury, refused to change her mind about either Kaplan's innocence or her own determination to testify, Lyons finally took his leave, saying, "You've come a long, long way, and I hate to see something like this happen to you, that's all. For what? For what?"

I gave the tapes back to the public-information officer, feeling thoroughly sick. Listening to them hadn't really told me anything new about Kaplan's guilt or innocence. But the experience had redoubled my feeling that if I could somehow vote again on the case, I would now vote to acquit.

IT wasn't that I had come to believe unshakably that Kaplan had not been one of Solder and Leamy's assailants. Nor was it that I believed that, as Kaplan put it, "the police and the D.A. built a phony case" against him. The District Attorney and the police almost certainly believed that they had caught and convicted a guilty man. And their failure to pursue the other muggers was not, in fact, unusual, I discovered. Even Kaplan's first lawyer on the case, Richard Armstrong, who was an experienced public defender, said that it didn't strike him as strange that they weren't interested. "It's the regular course of business," he said.

Neither was it that I swallowed whole the picture of Kaplan as a nonviolent criminal, as his ex-girlfriends painted him. He continued to phone me, and while I couldn't tell how much of it was prison bluster, his answers to some of my questions were decidedly rough. When, for instance, I tried to check with him Castellano's contention that she had never used needles, he growled, "I told her if I ever caught her with a fuckin' spike in her arm I'd break her arm." It was true that he had no previous convictions for violent felonies, but ten months before the Astor Place mugging he had been arrested for felony assault. Kaplan described that incident as a self-defense


LEMMING DROPS
Well, my psychiatrist says, "If it makes you happy, do it."
HANDELSMAN

mmzamilter

"Do you think this would have happened even if we weren't the last two smokers in the office?"

• •

stabbing—he had, he said, been fighting off two thugs who jumped him—and told me the charges had been dismissed. But his rap sheet showed that he had in fact pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of weapons possession. (Kaplan's rap sheet, even before his assault-and-robbery conviction, was at least twenty-five pages long and showed thirty convictions, and it covered only the eight years since he had turned sixteen. Numerous convictions for drug offenses contradicted his contention that his "entire record is for stealing cars.") More likely, I later thought, this incident had been what Agnifilo was referring to when he said, immediately after the trial, that Kaplan got violent if you caught him breaking into your car.

My problem was simply that I was now racked with doubt, reasonable and otherwise.

Armstrong seemed to have had similar problems. "I went through different periods of what I thought and didn't think about whether Kaplan did it or not," he said. "A lot of my clients do stay in one field, so to speak. A burglar doesn't become a robber, and a robber doesn't become a burglar. They're different mind-sets. So Martin's theory that he's a car booster and not a robber may have been right. You could even say he was building his alibi by getting arrested repeatedly for breaking into cars while we were preparing this case!" But Armstrong, too, had begun to wonder about Kaplan's capacity for violence. "He had a streak; like a bad temper. And while I never could see him being the instigator of a robbery, I could see him, after I got to know him, as an accomplice, maybe following his friends into something, being the third guy to stomp someone."

None of the witnesses of the assault in Astor Place had depicted Kaplan as a follower, though. Quite the contrary.

Unable to leave all this unknowing alone, I went looking for more alibi witnesses. Both Castellano and Tagliaferri had said that there were others who could place Kaplan with them at the time of the crime but that they had all been, for various reasons, reluctant to come forward. I found one of them in San Loco. He agreed to talk to me on the condition that I not publish his name. He said he had told Castellano, who had approached him about two weeks after Kaplan's arrest, that he simply could not remember the night in question, let alone Kaplan's precise movements. A few months later, he said, Castellano had relayed a message to him from Kaplan, who was by then in jail. "Martin said he was gonna kick my ass when he got out," he said, shrugging.

I asked if he believed that Kaplan was capable of a violent robbery.

He thought about it for a long time. "Yeah," he said finally. "It doesn't take much to jump somebody when you've got two other guys with you."

Another old street buddy of Kaplan's, whom I met the same day, said the same thing. And when I told him what Armstrong had said he laughed. "His lawyer said that? 'The third guy to stomp someone.' That's perfect." He also recalled Kaplan's arrest for stabbing somebody. The word on the street, he said, was that the charges had been reduced only because the car owner and victim didn't pursue it.

I noticed, though, that the customers standing at the counter in San Loco when I walked in were young men in black jackets, jeans, and heavy black boots—the same East Village uniform that had helped tie Kaplan to the Astor Place mugging. San Loco was an odd little place, with walls painted blood red and canary yellow, Latino laborers and white students streaming in and out, music blazing from a cheap sound system, and one wall covered with a manifesto about all the fresh and natural ingredients used in the kitchen. I tried to picture Kaplan in there, hanging out at a table with his friends, wired on cocaine or nodding on smack, blood running down his arms—the dashing, battered, nominally Jewish casualty from Canarsie. He might have cut a fairly formidable figure, I thought, among the more impressionable college kids. (And no taint of political correctness clung to *him*, to put off the tough nuts like Tagliaferri.)

But back to the facts: Agnifilo had been both right and wrong, it seemed, about why Armstrong left the case. He had indeed been in a quandary about whether to put Luciente Castellano on the stand, but not because he believed that her story was a lie. It was, rather, because he had been told that Castellano had "cracked"—that the D.A.'s office had caught her telling two different stories. Armstrong had spoken to her only over the phone, and he thought she sounded like a solid witness, but his confidence in her was also being undermined by Kaplan and Tagliaferri, who had described her as "unstable." However, when Armstrong told Kaplan that he was now reluctant to put Castellano on the stand, because she just might wreck their case, Kaplan was adamant that she should testify. It became a breaking issue, and Armstrong left the case. Hearing from me that Castellano had in fact been a strong witness, Armstrong sighed. "I guess I should have been more skeptical," he said. "About what I was hearing from the D.A. *and* Kaplan."

And from Tagliaferri, I thought, when it came to her rival, Castellano.

But I was also becoming familiar with Kaplan's penchant for disparaging Castellano, despite all she had done for him. He had maligned her several times during our conversations, for no apparent reason. I finally said something about it, and he said, sheepishly, "I'm just mad at her because she said she'd stay with me while I was in jail, and she didn't."

"But you two haven't been together for years."

"We haven't?" he said sharply. He let that hang in the air. Finally, he said, "Yeah, I guess we haven't, for a while."

I mentioned the bracelet of thorns on Castellano's wrist.

"Yeah, that's the other side of the tribal on my arm."

The tribal?

"It's a black tattoo. It originally started in tribes."

Both of Kaplan's lawyers had been impressed by the lasting hold he seemed to have over Castellano and Tagliaferri. "He's some kind of Svengali," Jerald Rosenthal said, when I called him.

I asked Rosenthal if he thought the women had told the truth in court. He said he did. But he also thought that Kaplan had probably committed the crime. "The girls didn't believe he had enough time to get up to this mischief, but he did." It was the same theory I had used to vote to convict, but I was amazed to hear that Rosenthal subscribed to it. Kaplan had complained to me that Rosenthal had never really cared about the case, but I thought he had fought hard. And Armstrong had said, when I told him about the trial, "Rosenthal must have done a good job, to keep the jury out overnight on that one."

I was happy to share the credit for keeping the jury out overnight. But that was all I was happy about, for I would probably never, I realized, attain anything like Rosenthal's seemingly settled mind about what had happened, or about my own role in it.

KAPLAN keeps calling. I come home from a weekend in the country and there are fifteen messages on my answering machine: all of them a recorded female voice intoning that I have a collect call from an inmate at a New York state prison. Sometimes, when he reaches me, he mutters that he shouldn't have phoned: he was just calling all the numbers on a list of those he is permitted to call, hoping to talk to anyone. We talk about his life in prison, his trial, his childhood, the story I'm writing. He frets that he will "look like a piece of shit" in this article, that people will now think he's H.I.V.-infected, that Castellano "is saying stuff about me, trying to break up me and Leah." He dreams ardently that I will somehow exonerate him. Once, he says, "Leah says you think I'm innocent."

I say that's not strictly true.

The truth is that I now have no idea whether Kaplan committed the crime for which I and my fellow-jurors sent him to prison.

We talk about his routine. "I'm studying for my G.E.D.," he says. His voice is flat. "I was working in the mess hall. That's real specialized training. I'll know how to wipe tables when I get out of here." The prison is thick with racial tension, he says, and there are too few white inmates to give him any protection. "If you ever wanted to write any stories on jail, I got some fuckin' funny stories," he says.

But none of the stories he tells me are funny.

I ask Kaplan what he's been reading.

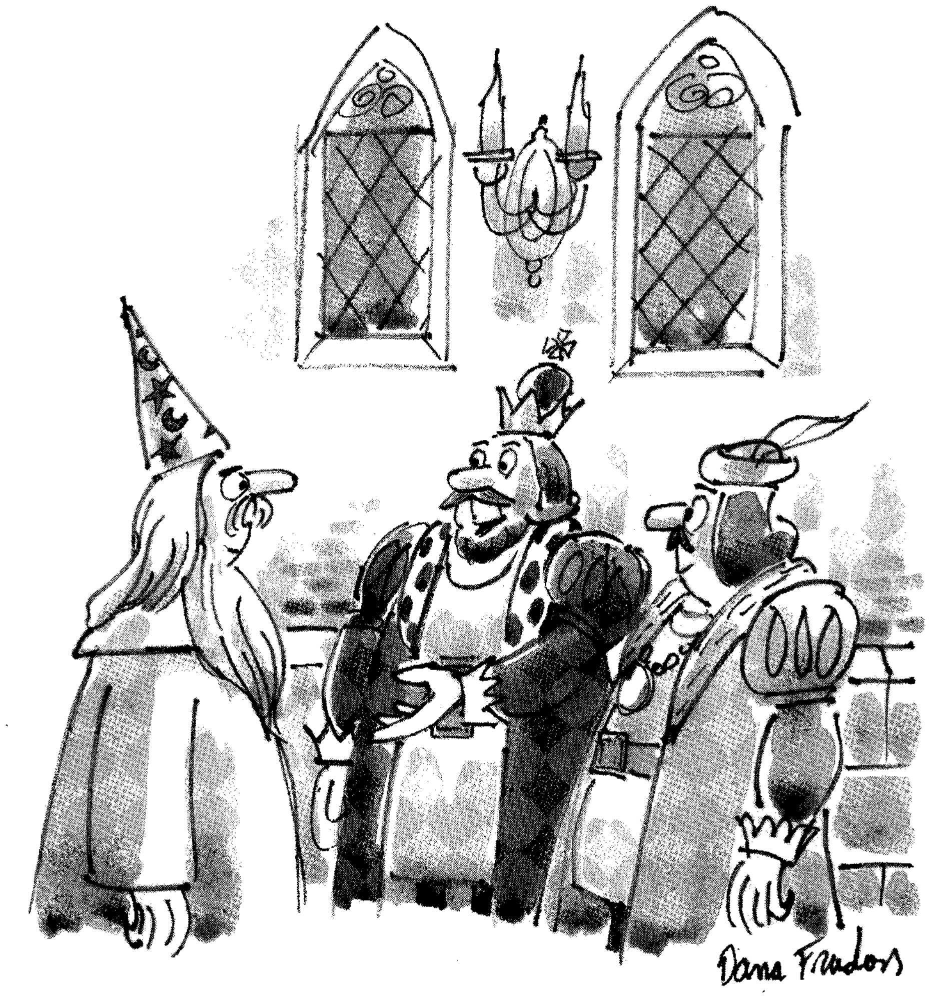
"This place ain't got no kind of library," he says.

I offer to send him a box of books. What kind would he like?

"Horror," he says.

On another occasion, he asks me point-blank if I believe he received a fair trial.

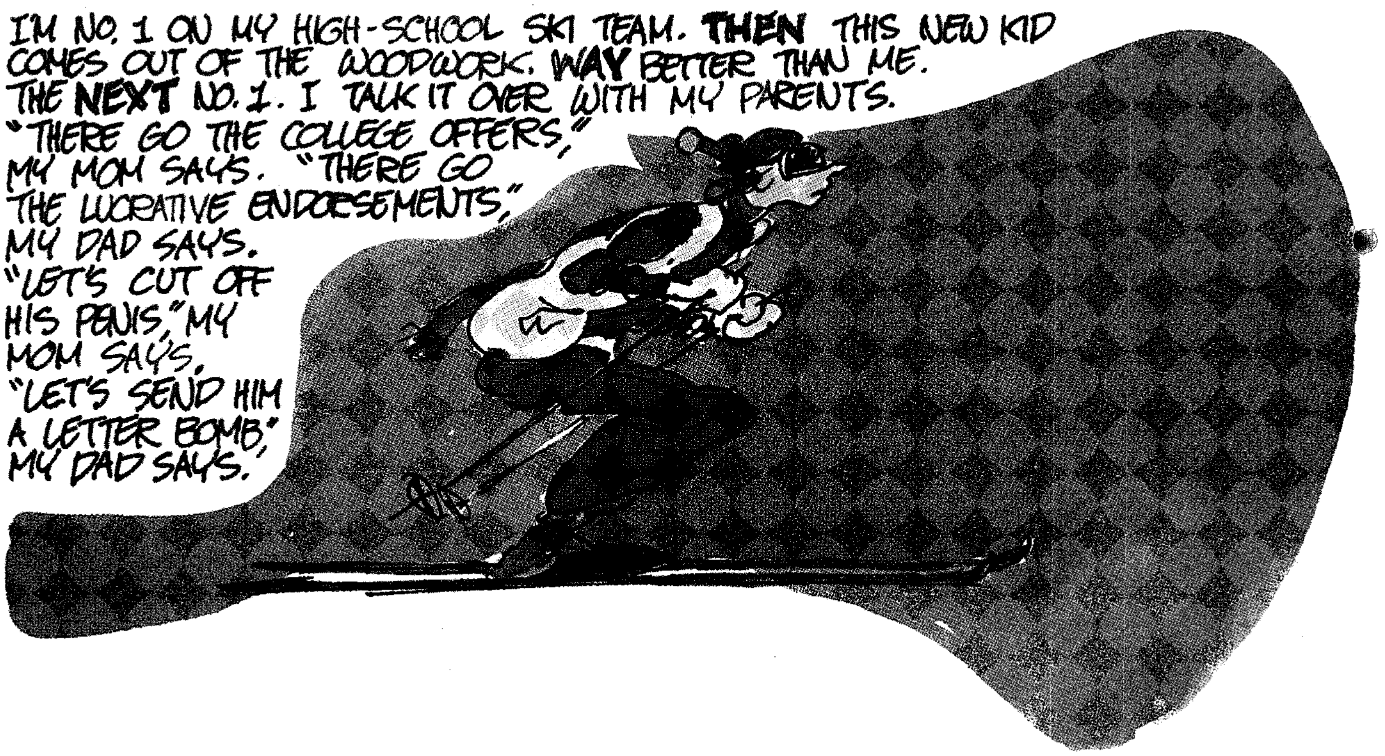
I think for a long time. Then I say, "Yes." ♦

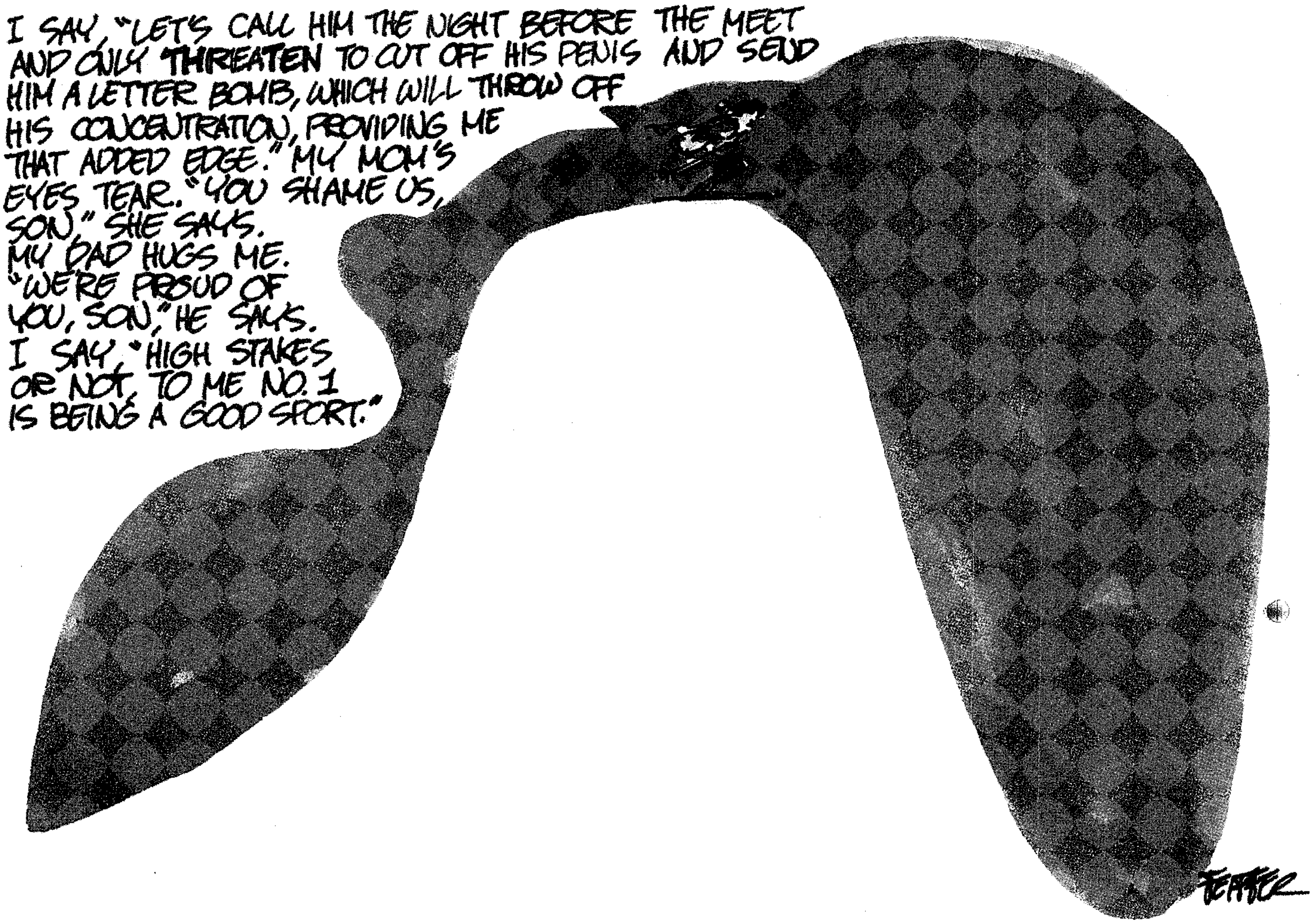


"Hobart, this is Merlin, my science adviser."

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK · BY JULES FEIFFER

SPORT ILLUSTRATED


I'M NO. 1 ON MY HIGH-SCHOOL SKI TEAM. **THEN** THIS NEW KID COMES OUT OF THE WOODWORK. **WAY** BETTER THAN ME. THE **NEXT** NO. 1. I TALK IT OVER WITH MY PARENTS. "THERE GO THE COLLEGE OFFERS," MY MOM SAYS. "THERE GO THE LUCRATIVE ENDORSEMENTS," MY DAD SAYS. "LET'S CUT OFF HIS PENIS," MY MOM SAYS. "LET'S SEND HIM A LETTER BOMB," MY DAD SAYS.


I SAY, "LET'S CALL HIM THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MEET AND ONLY **THREATEN** TO CUT OFF HIS PENIS AND SEND HIM A LETTER BOMB, WHICH WILL THROW OFF HIS CONCENTRATION, PROVIDING ME THAT ADDED EDGE." MY MOM'S EYES TEAR. "YOU SHAME US, SON," SHE SAYS. MY DAD HUGS ME. "WE'RE PROUD OF YOU, SON," HE SAYS. I SAY, "HIGH STAKES OR NOT, TO ME NO. 1 IS BEING A GOOD SPORT."
FEIFFER

FICTION

LAST ACTS

BY GEORGIA SHREVE

SHE was used to travelling but she performed mainly in big cities and didn't have to fly in small planes like this, so she was relieved when they finally touched down on the icy runway. She pulled her fur coat around her as she walked down the steps and into the small terminal. The airport had changed so much that she was forced to realize how long it had been since she had last visited her home town.

She felt impatient as she gathered her suitcases. She usually travelled with her manager, Donald, and he took care of the bags and transportation. The doctor had said her mother did not have much time, but he did not specify whether that meant hours, days, or weeks. She had promised her mother that she would get there in time. There were no official-looking cabs, but she found a black-and-white station wagon with a hand-printed sign in the window that said "Taxi." She had forgotten how cold it got there in the winter, but when she was a child she had barely noticed cold.

She thought it would feel strange to stay at her mother's house while she was in the hospital, so she had booked a motel room. She checked in, dropped her luggage there, and, without even going to her room, went straight to the hospital. The town, with its one-story buildings interspersed with silos, seemed more foreign than any country she had ever visited. As she drove up to the main entrance, she shuddered at what she had to face.

The ward was set up in a circle around a desk. As the nurse pointed her toward her mother's room, she tried not to look in the other rooms. When she entered, she was relieved to see that her mother was sleeping, because she would have been unable to hide her shock at how changed she looked. Her mother's hair, which for some reason had grown back in black and gray instead of brown and gray, was less than an inch long. Her hard, angular face had never been pleasant to look at, and now that she had lost so much weight it was almost frightening. Her skin was yellow and nearly transparent. The doctor had offered her several choices in chemotherapy, and she had chosen and bravely endured the toughest and most aggressive therapy in his arsenal, despite little hope of recovery. The tumor had been discovered too late. She had always made her own decisions; whether or not they were the right ones, they were her own. The cancer had tamed her mean streak, and, for a while, it appeared that her mean streak had tamed the cancer. As Olivia looked out the window, she was astounded at her mother's powerful will to remain in this place that seemed so barren—intolerable harsh winters, unbearable scalding summers on the verge of drought. Dust blew across these bare plains all summer, snow all winter. She could not understand why her mother had chosen to stay in this godforsaken town. She herself had escaped at seventeen with a scholarship to Juilliard.

Her mother's lunch, which was bland and mostly liquid, sat barely touched on a tray, starting to congeal. Olivia wondered whether she should wake her up, but she relished these few minutes to prepare herself in private.

Her mother's eyes opened slowly; at first she did not seem to see her daughter. "Turn off the television," she said in a barely audible voice. Olivia had not realized it was on. Her mother pointed a sharp, emaciated finger at an electronic device on the table, and Olivia fumbled with it until she got the television to go off. Suddenly Olivia felt cold, though she still had her fur coat on. She moved closer and took her mother's bony hand. "I'm here now," she said, but she worried that she had used her acting voice rather than her personal voice. She was less and less sure where one left off and the other began. "You should try to eat something," she said, echoing her mother's words from when she was a child.

Her mother shook her head in an abbreviated style, as if even the tiniest motions took too much out of her. "Chocolate milk," she said.

Olivia ran to the nurse to get some, but the nurse said it would be a while before she could bring it.

When Olivia returned to the room, her mother looked at her and said, "Comb your hair and tuck in your shirt." Proper and controlling to the last, thought Olivia. Her skirt, which was a little too big (she had lost weight recently, as if to mimic her mother), had slipped down a bit, allowing her silk blouse to become untucked. At the small mirror over the sink she ran a brush through her hair and neatened her blouse.

It seemed ages before the nurse came in with the little container of chocolate milk, just like the ones Olivia had been given in nursery school.

"This is Sharon," her mother said.

"I'm sure she's very glad you're here," said Sharon. "She's been looking forward to your arrival." Olivia wondered if the nurse was reproaching her for not coming earlier.

Soon, her mother fell back asleep, and Olivia went to the small room set aside nearby for patients' families. She was the only one in the room not wearing cowboy boots. All the grief-stricken faces were turned to a soap opera, and they seemed to be soaking up relief from other people's tragedies. Olivia very rarely watched television and resented the fact that these shows had borrowed the word "opera."

She realized that she had missed lunch, and though she was not hungry, she thought she should attempt to eat something. She wondered, as she walked down the hall and into the elevator, whether anyone would recognize her from television, but she wasn't sure whether any opera had ever reached this town. Certainly, it must be carried there on the airwaves, but that didn't mean anyone watched it. As she followed the signs to the cafeteria, she felt a sense of relief that no one seemed to know her, yet it seemed as though people were looking at her anyway. Of course, she was the only woman in a skirt. In this town, the skirt had died and been replaced by pants, which were better suited to the cold and the rugged life.

She slid her tray along the line, but nothing appealed to her. It was not just that this artificial and stale-looking food did not compare well with the elegant food in New York restaurants, it was that her interest in food had suddenly vanished. She finally bought a tuna-fish sandwich and sat down at one of the Formica tables, as far as possible from other people. She tried not to look at the patients sprinkled among the visitors, but the sight of their tubes and bandages killed off what was left of her appetite. The music piped into the room seemed unbearably insipid.

She forced herself to take a bite of the sandwich, but she imagined that the illness around her was contagious and might have contaminated the food. Already her breasts had begun to hurt, as if her mother's cancer had spread to them.

Donald had said, "Try not to cry too much—it's bad for your sinuses," and she tried to use these words now to maintain her composure.

A man came up to her suddenly, and she was afraid he was going to ask for an autograph, but he said, "Olivia." She thought there might be a phone message for her.

"Jake—Jake Olmstead," he said. "Remember—from high school?"

She did not remember. High school did not seem part of this century. Though she did not ask him to, he pulled up a chair and sat down across from her.

"Haven't seen you in an age," he said. "What you been doing?"

She was afraid opera would sound strange to him, so she said, "Singing."

"Really? I play guitar sometimes. I remember you were always in the girls' chorus."

"What have you been doing?" she asked, not sure that she wanted to know.

"I took over my dad's ranch when he died." She knew that the region had had bad weather and the ranchers were in trouble. "What brings you back?"

"My mother. . . . She's . . ."

"Oh," he said. "Sorry. Is she going to pull through?"

"No," she said. She couldn't believe she was discussing death with this man, who seemed a total stranger. She noticed the cowboy-boot-shaped rubbers on his feet.

"You look good," he said. "You married?"

"No," she said, realizing that working outdoors every day in the sun had made him look at least ten years older than she did. She had a horrible thought that he was going to ask her out. She made herself take another bite of the sandwich, but the tuna fish looked like ground-up wet rags.

"Do you . . . still know anyone . . . I mean, here?"

"No—no one," she said. "Why are you here, at the hospital?" She was afraid it had come out sounding unfriendly.

"My mother's in for diabetes again."

Suddenly, she remembered Mrs. Olmstead, and then her one painfully awkward date with Jake came back to her.

"I'd better get back to my mother," she said.

"If you need any help, I'll be here," he said.

WHEN she returned, her mother was awake, and Olivia felt bad about being out of the room for so long. Sharon came in with a snack, but Mrs. Jameson brushed it aside and asked for chocolate milk again.

"That's all she'll take," said Sharon. "Sarah, did you tell your daughter that you were voted most popular patient on the ward?"

A thin smile broke across her mother's face.

"Really, Mother? That's great."

Her mother seemed to come to life a bit. "My daughter's an opera singer," she said, in a low, strained voice. "A star."

Just then Olivia noticed the glossy photos of herself taped above her mother's bed. Their false glamour seemed appalling next to her mother's pallor.

"I know," said the nurse. "You told me all about her."

"I taught her to sing," said Sarah Jameson.

"That's what you said," the nurse added.

"Puccini, Verdi, Mozart. She can do them all."

The nurse nodded as she straightened the bed, but it was clear that these names meant nothing to her. "Don't you want the TV on?" she said, putting it on. Then she hooked up a bottle of blood.

"Don't let her give me too many of those," the mother said to her daughter. "They're very expensive."

"Please, mother, you don't have to worry about money."

As her mother lay there, the television bombarded her with irrelevant information. Neither the weather nor the economy mattered to her anymore—she would never go outside, she would never spend money again. Even entertainment was irrelevant, because there was so little time to pass.

"Turn it off," she said.

"I brought you the tape of my concert in Covent Garden."

"In a garden?"

"Yes, kind of. Would you like to hear it?" asked Olivia.

"Later," her mother said. She drifted back to sleep.

OLIVIA went back to the family waiting room. The television was on—these inescapable blind-eyed noise machines spewed forth ephemeral information in every room of the hospital—and the people in the room were discussing television with great interest, as if it were an art form instead of just a diversion, as if its characters were real instead of fictional. It had its own language—which Olivia had never heard—a foreign babble of entertainment which she, who understood so many languages, did not understand. And yet, if she had sat there talking about Rodolfo and Mimi, the other people in the room would have drawn the same kind of blank. She knew they could tell she didn't know what they were talking about. When the others were not paying attention, she turned the channel and, to her amazement, found an opera. There was a restlessness in the room. It was clear that no one else wanted to watch it, but she clung to it. She knew some of the singers on the stage, she knew some arias—it was a connection to the world she had come from, though it seemed incredibly remote.

Someone changed the channel without asking her. These people would never be famous or even know someone famous, yet they were in touch with fame through television and that seemed enough for them. To them opera was nothing, Vienna and London were nothing. If she had burst into an aria, they would not have recognized that specialness which other people admired; they would simply have thought her insane. In New York or Paris, if the conversation dragged, she could always talk about Puccini or Mozart, but these people had never heard of them. They could not talk of opera, which often concerned death, but they could talk about death itself. Art was the only way Olivia had ever known of talking about it.

Every time she entered the room, her mother's appearance gave her a new shock—she seemed to grow more gaunt and yellow by the hour. Olivia could not believe she had once sprung from that shrivelled body. There were several vases of inexpensive flowers sent by friends, which she hadn't noticed before. The flowers seemed out of place—to her, flowers were for positive things, like performances. Olivia leaned over and kissed her mother's sunken, bony cheek and said, "I love you."

"You've done everything right in your life," her mother said.

On her next trip to the cafeteria Olivia set herself the task of eating half a sandwich. Her stomach felt shrunken, shrivelled, like a scrotum. She had always had to worry about her weight and watch it carefully, but she was losing the ability to eat. She looked around to see if Jake was there. There was not a single familiar person. And all the faces were frozen in grief that did not lift in response to greetings or smiles—it was solid. Olivia had studied expressions of grief in order to perform them, but as she looked around she realized she had barely scratched the surface. And she had spent years practicing to cry onstage, and now she was trying to learn the opposite—to hide and hold back tears in

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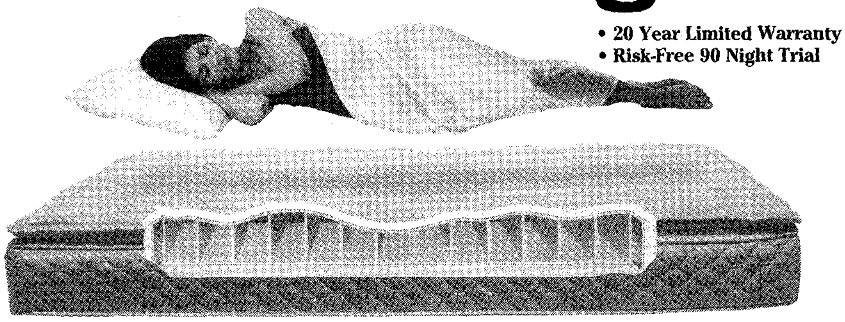

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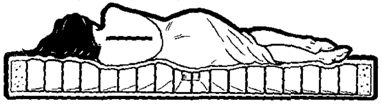

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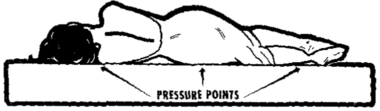

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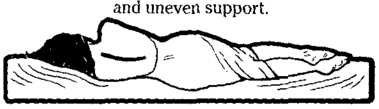

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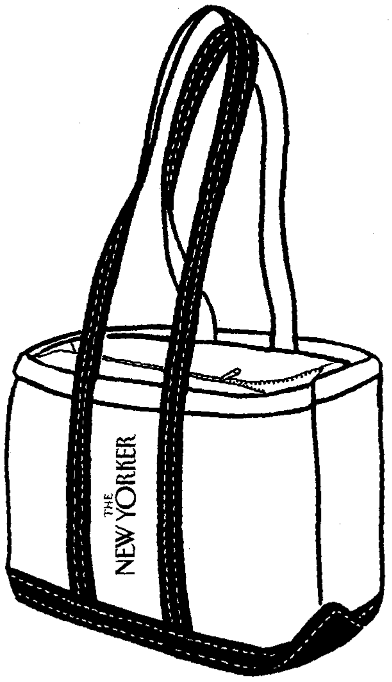

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front of her mother. But in this cafeteria, while her mother slept, the tears poured out—tears for her mother's suffering and all that she would miss. And she felt foolish, because it was her mother who should be crying. She put her head down and sobbed into her faded plastic tray without worrying about who heard her.

She felt a hand on her shoulder. She looked up. It was Jake. She felt the same shudder of aversion she felt when fans touched her; she always had Donald there to pull them off. Jake told her he wanted to show her something. He walked her to the tiny chapel in the hospital. Inside, it was bare and modern; colored glass had been set into the simple altar like fake jewels. There was a chillingly bad portrait of the chapel's donor, a disturbing plaque about his daughter's death. Olivia's first thought was that it was unbearably ugly. Jake left her there. She found that, for some reason, she could not cry anymore. After a while she felt calmer and went back to her mother's room. As she approached it, she stopped at the bathroom to wash her face. Her makeup was streaked, her eyes were swollen and red. She looked terrible, but she didn't care. Her vanity had deserted her. She washed her face only to hide the tears from her mother.

"The doctor's coming," her mother said, each word seeming to take more effort than the last. It was clear that she was looking forward to this. While they waited, Olivia took her mother's hand. They had had very little physical intimacy, even when she was a child. Her mother turned to her. "We never had enough good times," she said.

"That's true," said Olivia.

When Dr. Nagel stepped into the room, her mother brightened. It was clear immediately that this seventy-year-old woman had a crush on this forty-year-old man, though he was overweight, almost chinless, and going bald.

"This is my daughter," she said.

"Your mother sure is proud of you."

Olivia could see that he was painfully shy around women.

"Are you going to be on TV?" her mother asked her.

Olivia tried to figure out whether there were any broadcasts coming up. She remembered that "Tosca" would be shown again the next night. "Tomorrow night," she said, with some doubt that the broadcast would actually reach this town.

"Will you come?" the mother asked the doctor, as if she were offering him a ticket.

"Sure," he said. After he examined her mother, he took Olivia outside the room. The moment she was in the hall, she started to cry.

"Oh, come on," the doctor said. "We all go through this." She didn't know whether he meant dying or losing a mother. It was obvious that in this place where a thousand cattle could be wiped out overnight in a storm, tears were not admired or even wise.

"What is death like?" she asked, barely able to speak.

"Don't worry—there won't be any pain."

"But won't she be terrified?"

He looked at her as if this question were ridiculous. "She will be at peace."

As she walked around the hospital that evening, she mastered a technique of looking at people without seeing them, much as a performer looks at the audience but does not focus on them. As she sat in the family waiting room, she learned how to talk to people without listening to them. As a woman told her a horrible story about her daughter's going blind from a car accident, Olivia thought of stage sets and costumes. It was the only way she could survive in this region of horrors.

She looked for Jake and couldn't find him—so she decided to find his mother's room. She peeked in, but the nurse stopped her. "They had to amputate this morning," she said. Olivia felt faint and nauseated and had to sit down.

When she went back to her mother's room, her mother said she was afraid to be alone that night. The other bed in her double room was free, so Olivia lay down on it. But she couldn't sleep because she felt that her mother could die at any minute. Olivia wondered whether she would groan first or whether she would just silently die. And her mother couldn't sleep, because she was afraid of dying in her sleep. She kept calling out to her daughter. By morning, Olivia had tossed and turned so much during the night that the skin on her knees felt raw.

All the next day, her mother looked forward to seeing her daughter on television that night. She made the nurses promise to come in and watch.

Olivia ran into Jake in the cafeteria at lunchtime. She was afraid to ask about his mother. She invited him to join them for the broadcast.

When he entered the room that evening, her mother was very excited to see him. She remembered her daughter's dates better than Olivia did, and had always enjoyed men, especially since her husband, who had abandoned her when their daughter was only ten, had been so inattentive. Olivia could see that Jake had put on a clean shirt—a red cowboy shirt with ridiculous pearl-covered snaps, which looked like a cheap costume.

Sarah Jameson was concerned about whether the doctor would arrive in time for the program. But, just as the opening credits were dancing across the screen, he appeared. Olivia realized suddenly how awful she looked—she, who had always worked so hard to look perfect in public, had slept in her clothes and hadn't even taken a shower.

She was worried that the story of "Tosca," with its horrible deaths, would upset her mother. When she saw herself come on the screen in a long gown, she thought she looked ridiculous. But her mother beamed and looked from face to face to see if the others were as admiring as she was. Olivia could tell that Jake would have preferred a rodeo, and the doctor looked as if he needed to be somewhere else, but Mrs. Jameson was enlivened by the event and insisted on buying everyone soft drinks. Though their attention wandered, the nurses commented on the "pretty costumes."

The first death scene was coming up, and Olivia was getting nervous—what would her mother think of her flawed, artificial enactment, her cheap imitation, of a response to death? But before the beginning of Act II her mother's eyes closed. At first Olivia thought she was dead, but then she heard the shallow breathing.

The doctor led Olivia out of the room. "We have to make a decision," he said. "How long we try to keep her alive. If it were me, I'd send her home and let her die in peace, but if we keep her here, she might have a few more days." It was the first time the actual word "die" had been used, and it was like a sword going through her.

"Why can't you keep her here, then?" asked Olivia.

Victoria Roberts

"A man and his choo-choo."

• •

"I can, but it's her decision. Most people like to die at home."

"Are you going to ask her?"

"No. That's your job."

"I can't," she said. "I can't ask a question like that."

"She's your own mother."

"I can't do it," she said, unable to hold back the next wave of sobs. "Please do it for me." This came out half plea and half order. The doctor did not try to hide his disgust at her weakness.

"You try to ask her tonight. If you really can't do it, I'll ask her in the morning."

OLIVIA spent another sleepless night. After many years of watching every minute of her schedule, she no longer knew what day of the week it was or even what time. She lay awake trying to form the question she was supposed to ask, but could not do it. The next morning the doctor burst in, took one look at Olivia, and said to her mother, like a waiter asking for an order, "O.K., what's it going to be? Do you want to stay here and have us do a lot of stuff to you, or do you want to go home?" It had not occurred to Olivia that the question could be framed without the word "die."

"I want to look out my window," her mother said simply.

She was in good spirits that whole morning, thinking about going home. Her volunteer Adopt-a-Friend wept profusely as she said goodbye, knowing she would never see this brave, strong woman again. Olivia concluded that if you want to live you should be in a complex urban hospital, but if you want to die you should be in a friendly small-town one.

Olivia tried to deal with the process of leaving the hospital with calmness and an element of humor—the way her mother wanted it.

The snow had started to fall in the middle of the night, and the hospital van, with her mother and several others in wheelchairs, had to make several runs at the hill in front of her house. The other patients were terrified, but the van driver was relentless and finally got them to the front door. Dr. Nagel himself met them there to carry Mrs. Jameson in. She bragged about this for the rest of the day. Olivia had pleaded with him to find a nurse to help her, and, though he thought this was an absurd request, he had come up with an older woman to stay in the house.

The hospital bed could not fit in the tiny bedroom, so her mother had to lie in the living room. Because her mother always visited her in New York, Olivia had never been in this house during the seven years her mother had lived there. The view out the window into the snowy hills was more beautiful and dramatic than her own extremely expensive view high above Central Park. Her

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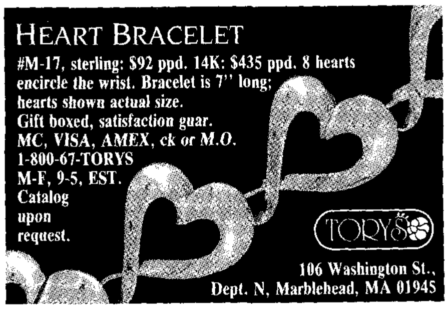

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mother spent the day gazing out at the hills with her daughter holding her hand. It didn't seem possible that she could become more emaciated, and yet she had. Her thin, yellow skin was hard, and tight to her bones. "I didn't nurse my mother, but I nursed your father's mother," she said, as if to justify what her daughter had to go through. And then, a bit later, she turned and said in the dimmest voice, "It's O.K. to cry," and Olivia burst into tears. The sheer adversity of the land had tempered her mother's character and taught her to ridicule weakness. She shed no tears over her own fate, but she was making an exception and allowing her daughter some. Olivia, on the other hand, had always tried to hide the toughness her mother had bred into her, because it seemed unfeminine and unrefined.

Olivia walked through the small house, looking at the simple furniture and the plain clothes that flanked the few fancy dresses she had bought for her mother in New York. She sat down at her desk—merely a portable card table with folding chairs—and read through her papers. It became obvious that the many large checks she had sent her mother had all gone into her bank account—not a penny had been spent. And all this time Olivia had had the illusion that, though she didn't often see her mother, because of her busy schedule, she was helping her. She read her mother's will. She had left all her money and her home to be used for musical performances.

Though her speech was fading, Sarah Jameson asked, as she had a hundred times, "Do you have a boyfriend?" and Olivia felt guilty as she said no, and promptly regretted that she had not lied. She knew that she had deeply disappointed her mother in not getting married and having babies like the children of all her friends. Instead, she had dedicated herself to opera. She had been an only child, and her mother had doted on her. When her mother died, she would be left truly alone. But there was still time, she thought.

In a few days, she was supposed to be in New York for the opening night of an important opera. Her mother was worried about her missing the performance, but Olivia told her that she wouldn't leave her. Her mother tried to say something, and at first Olivia couldn't understand it. Finally, she made it out. "I couldn't have done this without you."

"You have made it easy for me," said Olivia.

THAT evening, Olivia restlessly prowled the house—pacing, stalking, trying to imagine that her aimless movements were stage directions. The doorbell rang. It was Jake, with a guitar in one hand and a small bouquet of daisies in the other. Her mother reached for the flowers, but she could not hold them. Olivia wove one of the daisies through her fingers so she could grasp it.

Jake asked if he could stay for a while.

"Of course," said Olivia with some surprise. To keep her mother from shivering, they kept putting the heat up, until it was almost ninety degrees in the house. Olivia and the daisies were parched and wilting. Jake sat by a crack in the window trying to breathe. The snow poured down as if it were trying to smother the hills.

"Your mother?" was all Olivia could manage.

"Died last night," he said.

"Oh, God," Olivia said. She remembered when Mrs. Olmstead had helped sew her prom dress.

Jake's hair and skin looked dry, and coarse as wool. His cheeks had a sunken quality, from the tight pull of his sun-baked skin. He had scars on his forehead and chin. He was thin, not from sports, like the other men she knew, but from hardship. His last "book learning" had been in high school. Her friends would have mistaken him for an out-of-work character actor. Yet Olivia felt an impulse to embrace him, even to sleep with him. She couldn't figure out why a shred of sexuality had outlasted her appetite and ability to sleep—she felt a wave of guilt about it. He took her hand.

THAT night Jake stayed on the sofa in the living room, spelling Olivia at her mother's side, while the nurse pretended to be asleep in the back bedroom. Olivia could tell by the way Jake slept without a blanket or pillow that he could have slept anywhere—on the floor or a rock ledge.

THE next day, Jake made breakfast and lunch for Olivia, but she could eat only a few bites. She had had a live-in cook for years, and was helpless in the kitchen.

"What will it be like?" she asked,

when Jake had finished doing the dishes after lunch.

"Not that ugly," he said. She could tell that he sensed that for her the aesthetics were the worst part, and Olivia felt ashamed of her physical aversion to death.

"She loved music," Olivia said, trying to think of something beautiful. She knew that to Jake this meant country-and-Western. Later, she heard him strumming his guitar in a primitive manner from the bedroom.

When Olivia was born, her father had named her Jane, without consulting his wife. When he left them, her mother had renamed her Olivia, after a local singer who was famous at the time. She thought she must have been the only other Olivia in the state and had been subjected to terrible teasing in school about her new name. For the first time in years, she felt like Jane again.

Late that afternoon, when Jake and Olivia sat down next to her, Mrs. Jameson smiled. "Is your husband staying for dinner?" she asked, nodding at Jake.

"Yes," said Olivia, trying not to puncture the illusion that was setting in as reality faded.

"Be sure to defrost the roast for him, Jane," she said.

WHEN Dr. Nagel visited that evening, he confirmed Olivia's fear that her mother was slowly bleeding to death. The nurse rolled her over to change her gown. Her breasts had shrunk, her buttocks had disappeared, and her genitals seemed to have retracted—her sexuality was completely erased. Olivia tried to figure out how to wash the blood-soaked towels in the washing machine, but she hadn't done laundry in ten years. And she was overcome by squeamishness. Jake took over.

LYING in her mother's bed the next morning, Olivia screamed when she saw a huge pair of cowboy boots descending a ladder outside the window. The man explained to Jake that he was checking the roof for snow problems.

"But why?" Olivia asked Jake.

"Because he's a neighbor," Jake said.

AFTER cleaning up breakfast, Jake joined Olivia at her mother's side. Her mother attempted to speak, but no words came out. Olivia tried to remember what her last word had been. She herself had the diction of four languages at her disposal and her mother no longer had any.

A bitter look came over her mother's stony eyes, a final reckoning of the fact that nothing good was going to come her way again—it was too late. Her daughter was the only good thing that had ever happened to her.

Olivia thought about all the deaths she had enacted. She knew how people were supposed to die—they were supposed to collapse on the floor singing—and her mother was not following the script. Her own efforts to portray death seemed pale and pathetic. Opera is an idealized reality and so is fame, and she had lived in both of them, but there were no magical solutions here. Yet she knew that her performances in the future would carry the weight of truth.

Her mother was trying to say something. She pointed to her daughter's mouth. Olivia still couldn't understand.

"Sing," Jake said.

Olivia started to sing. She was four bars into it before she realized she was singing "Addio del passato," from "La Traviata." She sang it over and over again, and every time her voice started to fade from fatigue, her mother squeezed her hand and she picked up volume again. She had often portrayed this dying Violetta bidding farewell to the past. She felt bad that her mother did not understand Italian, but she was afraid to stop and translate for her. Her vocal cords hurt so much that she was worried they would be permanently damaged, but she kept on singing. The nurse was hiding in the bedroom, because the singing frightened her.

Olivia looked down at her mother, remembering how she used to sing her to sleep. Her eyes grew stonier and seemed to drift away, and her hand became hard. Jake had left the room and she heard him on the phone calling the ambulance.

By the time the paramedics came to the door, Olivia could barely go on singing. She heard one of the men say loudly, "Must be someone alive in there; they're playing the radio."

And the other said, "Yes, and it's that damn station you hate." ♦

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THE CRITICS

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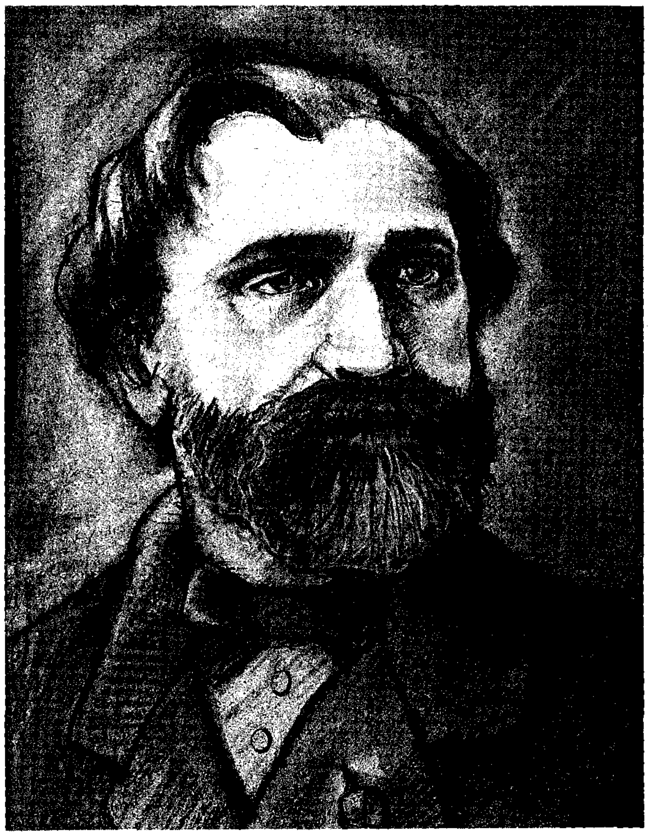
BY WILL CRUTCHFIELD

WHEN Giuseppe Verdi died, in 1901, his operas dominated the repertory. His last two, “Otello” and “Falstaff,” were young in memory and were received everywhere as masterpieces; “Rigoletto,” “La Traviata,” and “Il Trovatore,” then half a century old, were loved by the public, condescended to by critics, and neglected by progressive opera houses; “Aida,” poised in between, defined grand opera in every city that could afford it; the fame and fire of “Ernani” generated occasional revivals; and, at least in Italy, “Un Ballo in Maschera” had a regular public. But that is a list of eight. Today, twice as many are near-staples, shared landmarks in everyone’s operagoing life.

What we have learned—since the *Verdiwelle* of the nineteen-twenties and thirties in Germany and the great revivals of the nineteen-fifties in Italy and the English-speaking countries—is that there is almost as much to love in Verdi’s failures as in his successes. The imbalances that once told against uneven, experimental operas like “La Forza del Destino” and “Don Carlos” can scarcely be felt any longer; the understanding with which their human conflicts are drawn and the Shakespearean variety and sprawl of the world into which their characters are thrown count for everything. The deep sadness of “Simon Boccanegra,” the verve and tapestrylike richness of “Les Vêpres Siciliennes,” the chill of “Macbeth,” the raw thrust of “Nabucco,” the crushing of tenderness by implacability in “Luisa Miller” have made each of these operas in its own way essential. “Stiffelio” has only in the last two seasons begun to be revealed in its true color, and that color, too, is unique—oppressive and sere.



La forza del destino: Mary Jane Phillips-Matz heroically uncovers the intimate Verdi in the first comprehensive biography of the composer in more than thirty years.

At the same time, the familiar operas have only gained ground. A year after Verdi’s death, one of New York’s leading critics could say in passing that “Signor Scotti . . . warmed all hearts capable of feeling warmth for such an old-fashioned marionette as the Hugo-Piave-Verdi operatic hunchback.” Reading such judgments—thinking, perhaps, of John Rawnsley bent and panting on the stage as he waited through the thunders of applause that followed his denunciation of the courtiers in Jonathan Miller’s mafioso “Rigoletto” for the English National Opera—we shake our heads in amazement. Rigoletto’s humiliation, Violetta Valery’s noble sacrifice, old-fashioned? Like Falstaff’s lovably preposterous self-confidence, Azucena’s terrible obsession, and Otello’s cries of inner torment, they live where fashion does not reach.

Verdi became a great craftsman, at whose work musicians could marvel even if it had nothing to do with the theatre. He rewards richly the analysis that has begun to be applied, in the past couple of decades, to his orchestration, form, and (especially) harmony. But there is an element of pure fire in the operas that has held the public—even while the erudite were deceived—that ignores swings of taste, outruns parody, survives routine, and eludes analysis. A long-anticipated biography by Mary Jane Phillips-Matz has now appeared: “Verdi: A Biography" (Oxford; $45), a book without any fire (unless it is the very low flame that spends all day cooking a stew), which explains that elusive element as never before, and compels a new understanding of the man in whom it burned. After finishing this book, one finds it hard to speak of Verdi assimilating his own experience and seeking expression for it in his art: it is all too immediate. The directness of the link *is* the directness of the musical expression; the intensity of his feelings *is* the intensity of the scores; the desperation of his choices *is* the desperation his characters throw off, like sparks, in the cruel situations to which he brings them.

Considering the highly unsatisfactory state of Verdi biography, and the enormous growth of Verdi studies in the wake of the expanded repertory, it is surprising that a major effort based on new research has been so long in coming. (The last comprehensive life of Verdi appeared in 1959.) But there have been unusual obstacles. One is that the most important source material still lies in his villa at Sant'Agata, where his heirs, the Carrara-Verdis, have controlled access to it, and have been deeply sensitive to investigation of the composer's private life. Phillips-Matz, who has been a fixture on the Verdi scene since 1955—charting his life in *Opera News* articles, reading startling papers at Verdi conferences—courted the family with slow care. But at the eleventh hour they denounced the book in mortification over a *Corriere della Sera* article that put a sensational spin on its new revelations, and attempted to withdraw their permissions and block publication. Oxford was compelled to reset all the prefatory material to omit any implication that the family had helped to drag their great benefactor's name through the mud. So the Carrara-Verdis are not thanked, indexed, or even mentioned, and the author's otherwise detailed account of her methods and sources can only leave the uninformed reader asking in perplexity how so many quotations came to bear the note "SAA" (for "Sant'Agata Archive"). Phillips-Matz has also gained access to unpublished letters—some of them enormously revealing—that are still in the hands of their recipients' descendants, and has absorbed copious local traditions and family anecdotes. Scrutinizing previously unexamined parish registers, adoption records, financial ledgers, deeds and titles, and census reports, she became, in effect, a local historian, genealogist, and—following a fast-cooling but not quite cold track—oral historian of the town of Busseto and the Verdis. "Memories passed on through generations," Andrew Porter writes in his foreword to the text, "can be revealing, they can be distorted, and often they can be checked." The new book is not an interpretation of the composer's life—still less of his works—but the fruit of some thirty-five years' heroic checking.

THE outline of Verdi's public life has always been well known, and some of the marked discrepancies between the life and long-established myths have been known since Frank Walker's "The Man Verdi" (a study that would have become a biography) was published after the author's death, in 1962. The composer was born, in October of 1813, in the village of Le Roncole, near Busseto, where he grew up, and the hamlet of Sant'Agata, where he eventually bought farmland and built his house. His parents' livelihood—from innkeeping and farming—allowed Verdi to emphasize humble agrarian origins in later years, but there was property, money, and musicianship in the family tree. The young man's talent was recognized early enough and, with the support of Antonio Barezzi, a local merchant who became his father-in-law, he was given what training Busseto could offer before he went to study in Milan. The period leading up to his first opera ("Oberto," produced at La Scala in 1839) has previously been little documented; Phillips-Matz describes a young man acquiring expensive "Milanese habits," regularly spending far beyond his means, neglecting his studies, and offending a landlord through arrogance and free habits, with young women in particular. Phillips-Matz is willing to present Verdi in whatever unflattering light the evidence casts—but an unshakably attractive character emerges nevertheless. Nothing like the cold pretentiousness that clings to Wagner is remotely in evidence, nor is the peculiar frivolousness of Mozart or the tortured self-alienation and bizarre behavior of Beethoven. Verdi had big appetites, got most of what he wanted, and found it was never enough; he felt his enthusiasms and grievances intensely and let nothing stand in the way of his inner purposes.

It is thrilling to follow the narrative as it reaches Verdi's operatic career, with the music playing in one's memory, and to see just where the clay turns hot in his hands. His first decade in the theatre was dominated by risorgimento politics and his own struggles for independence from town and family. His professional beginnings were thwarted by the petty intrigues of the Busseto clergy; his spectacular successes of the eighteen-forties were slightly soured by his habit of overreaching himself financially and turning to his father for help. Giuseppina Strepponi, a passionate soprano who spent her voice on fiery, dramatic roles, supported Verdi early by declaring to the impresario of the Teatro alla Scala, where her word counted, that she wanted to sing in "Oberto." A delay in that production prevented her participation, but she played the heroine of his first great success, "Nabucco," in 1841. Verdi's wife, the daughter of his benefactor Barezzi, died soon after "Oberto" had its première, and Strepponi's career faltered after the opening of "Nabucco." She became Verdi's lover, and they lived together on and off in Paris and, after 1849, in Verdi's home town.

The book's most spectacular revelation is that Verdi and Strepponi seem to have had a daughter, in 1851, and to have abandoned her for charity adoption. Phillips-Matz presents this in the chastest possible way. Strepponi was known to have borne illegitimate children (four at a minimum, Phillips-Matz's new information suggests). Unexplained comings and goings, and cryptic remarks in letters in the winter of 1850-51 suggested to Phillips-Matz that Strepponi could have been pregnant then—in which case the father would probably have been Verdi. A painstaking search of dispersed and almost inaccessible records (the parish priest of Santa Maria della Pietà is charmingly thanked for opening "a locked cabinet of the lowest storage cellar" in the Cremona City Hospital) yielded the information that a baby girl identified as "Santa Streppini" was abandoned at the Ospedale Maggiore in Cremona on April 14, 1851, and later assigned, as "Santa Stropellini," to foster

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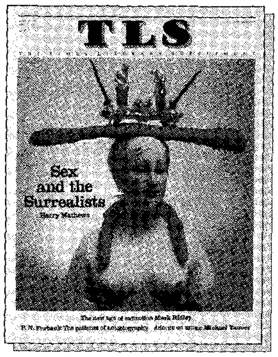

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parents on a farm near Verdi's property. On April 15th, Verdi wrote to his friend and librettist Francesco Maria Piave of reaching "a fork in the road that is so dreadful that I do not know how to get out of it." This is one of a stunning series of letters, from a still unidentified private collection, published for the first time by Phillips-Matz. "No proof exists," she repeats carefully, "that she was Verdi's child." No, but there is the music for fathers and daughters that flows like lava through the next decade.

During those years, Verdi resolves to return to his home province, and to bring Strepponi with him, though she was unmarried and socially unacceptable for her promiscuity. He breaks bitterly with his parents and some old friends, and he makes four operas in quick succession in which a woman's infidelity or loss of virtue is set, at varied angles, against a punitive father figure. His own father was clearly scandalized, along with Busseto in general, at the establishment of a compromised woman in Verdi's town house; in "Luisa Miller," Verdi imagines, with broad, noble melodies, a father who takes a stand for the sanctity of his child's right to choose a spouse. In "Stiffelio," a husband struggles to find a response outside the traditional Italian vocabulary of revenge for his wife's liaison with another man. In "Rigoletto," a man who lives a double emotional life sees his daughter ruined by his own vengefulness and the cynical world he hates. In "La Traviata," a demimondaine whose health is destroyed finds a brief solace that is broken by her lover's conservative father.

And then, in "Il Trovatore," Verdi imagines a mother haunted by the memory of having cast her child into the fire. The lurid plot (Azucena kills her son by a horrible mistake, during an attempt to murder another child) was an easy target for parody even before "A Night at the Opera." Few in the audience at the Savoy Theatre in the eighteen-eighties would have missed the reference when Little Buttercup sang, in Azucena's key of E minor, "Oh, bitter is my cup!/However could I do it?/I mixed those children up/And not a creature knew it!" But one must stand at some distance to get the comic effect; close in, Azucena's terror envelops. And now who will not shudder all the more at the climax of her narrative? She has already made the awful revelation, but she cannot let it go; she screams out the words over and over, with answering howls of dissonance from the orchestra at each punctuation: *"Mio figlio . . . mio figlio . . . il figlio mio . . . il figlio mio avea bruciato!"* Verdi is standing at the edge of an abyss and looking straight in through the crazed eyes of the old gypsy.

Meanwhile, he evicted his parents from Sant'Agata and settled his debts to his father through a lawyer's mediation. (On the same day, he wrote to his librettist to say that finished portions of "Rigoletto" had just been put in the coach, and to his lawyer to cut off his mother from the proceeds of the Sant'Agata chicken yard—not "out of stinginess, but because I do not want my parents to have any rights at all, either small or large.") His next two operas are about fathers—one bitterly divided from his son ("Les Vêpres Siciliennes") and one reunited beyond all hope with a daughter lost in infancy ("Simon Boccanegra"). That familial themes loom large in his work is not in itself striking; variations on them run through most lives. But Verdi sought these subjects avidly and turned to them in the very midst of his own corresponding experiences: the keenest convergences between his subjects and his life detonated his astonishing bursts of artistic growth.

The immediacy of these connections leaps out everywhere. When Verdi went to Rome in 1852, he didn't want Strepponi with him, and she protested in beautiful letters from "exile" in Livorno and Florence. "Love me as I love you!" she pleads in a letter that reached Verdi as he was trying, with little success, to get "Traviata" written while rehearsing "Trovatore." One would give a lot to know whether the line was already in the libretto of "Traviata" as Piave submitted it or was one of the changes (always numerous) requested by Verdi. In the finished opera, it is the emotional climax of Act II, when Violetta—speaking to the lover who does not yet know the terrible sacrifice she has promised his father she will make—cries out, *"Amami, Alfredo,* *quant'io t'amo . . . Addio!*" It has no part in the formal structure of the opera but wells up out of what ought to have been a passage of recitative between the Violetta-Germont duet and the aria of Germont. And the repeated descending phrase of its melody is borrowed from Donizetti's "Pia de' Tolomei." "Surely," writes William Ashbrook in his study of Donizetti, "the resemblance is no more than coincidence." Surely it is more. Verdi first heard that tune addressed—with reproachful, accusing words—to Pia in the person of Strepponi on the stage of La Scala in that heady season of 1839.

Isn't Violetta really Strepponi? "The notion . . . is surely preposterous," the eminent English Verdi scholar Julian Budden has written. "One can imagine his blind fury if the idea were put to him." One can, since Verdi hated to have his motives guessed at. But why all these defensive "surely"s? Violetta is his impassioned portrait—his declaration to *la traviata*, the fallen woman to whose heights no one could reach.

To the librettist of "Trovatore," Verdi wrote of a bold vision of freedom from formal conventions:

> If in operas there were no more cavatinas, no more duets, no more trios . . . if the whole opera were one single piece, I would find that more reasonable and right. . . . It would be a good thing if, in the beginning of this opera, the chorus could be left out (every opera begins with a chorus); if Leonora's cavatina could be left out; and we begin right off with the Troubadour's song.

Phillips-Matz comments that "the end result speaks for itself," in that "the opera begins with a chorus and includes the set pieces that the composer hoped to avoid." But no: "Amami, Alfredo" speaks. It was precisely this power to fill situations with music independently of form that enabled Verdi to let the forms slip away and to fulfill the vision of the "Trovatore" letter. "When I am alone and am wrestling with my notes," he wrote to Piave, "then my heart pounds, tears stream from my eyes, and the emotions and pleasures are beyond description." That is not a description of how he felt but a statement of his method.

"Dad, I need to dip into my college fund."

STREPPONI herself was a great spirit—resourceful, very funny, hardheaded. Her banter with Verdi is like his music for the merry wives of Windsor forty years later: "My dear Wizard, your heart is *an angel's heart*, but your head—as far as language and certain ideas are concerned—has a skull *so thick* that if Gall were alive, he could add certain curious observations to his treatise on *Craniology*." Her letters betray the sadness of a lost career ("When I too was an artist . . . my name kept me company"), but Phillips-Matz exaggerates the pitifulness of her position. Many a singer has wrecked her voice and had to turn to teaching, as Strepponi did; her liaison with Verdi was not the rescue of a hopeless woman by a benefactor but a meeting of two sharp artistic minds. In Phillips-Matz's detailed portrait we see her doing things a self-help book could have warned against—she campaigns against certain of Verdi's relatives and friends—and suffering deeply when, many years later, he began a long affair with a younger singer. But they were at each other's side for half a century, and the joy of many of those years shines from her letters. I'm not sure how many artistic marriages could confidently be declared happier.

The actual marriage took place in 1859, when the couple had been living together for ten years and had been lovers for longer. In the meantime, Verdi had established a large, steady income based on rights to the operas he had already written. (Phillips-Matz calculates the value of his estate at over twenty-three million current dollars.) Donizetti never earned the luxury that Verdi now had: Verdi could wait for inspiration; he could search carefully for subjects and demand even more of his librettists than he had before; he could compose at leisure; he could—and constantly did—threaten to withdraw his scores if his demands were not met. His production seems to have slowed in the second half of his life only if one counts operas by number: when the sheer concentration of material—the amount of composition that required thought (as opposed to the application of formula)—and the technical advances made in each opera are considered, it is clear that he did not really break stride until the years just after the "Requiem," of 1874.

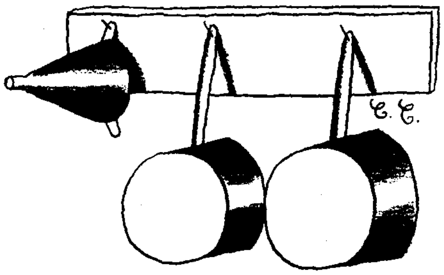
In "Don Carlos" (1867) and "Aida" (1871), two women are fierce rivals for the tenor's love. The role of the preferred woman was usually interpreted by Teresa Stolz (1834-1902), a Bohemian soprano engaged to the conductor Angelo Mariani. He was one of a new breed—the *maestro concertatore* who would take charge of an opera as the composer's proxy, leading not from the first violinist's chair but from the conductor's podium; Verdi began to insist that his new operas could be given only where such a conductor wielded authority. But Stolz became Verdi's mistress, and Mariani the injured party in an ugly breach with the composer. The most touching new material concerning Stolz in Phillips-Matz's book deals not with the marital crisis she precipitated (though that is very thoroughly treated) but with the composer's last years—after Strepponi's death, two decades later, in 1897. By 1900, the eighty-seven-year-old composer and the sixty-six-year-old Stolz were near-constant companions, and when she went off to a spa while he took care of business at Sant'Agata he wrote almost daily:

> Delightful hours but too short! . . . Love me well always, and believe in my [love], great, very, very great, and very true. . . . I am feeling a moment of good humour and I give you not one kiss but two. . . . I will send the two-horse carriage at whatever time you wish. . . . So everything is set for Saturday morning at nine. . . . If you approve, just send me a word: 'All right!' Oh! Joy! Joy!

But Strepponi was devastated by the affair, and Verdi none too solicitous of her position. Nor was Mariani the only colleague he treated harshly. Verdi could be exacting, unforgiving, unreflective, and implacable. If the heart leaps to defend him, it is because he has given the heart so much, taught it, spoken for it. What makes one person respond to crisis with retrenchment and another with house fires of creative energy? Verdi's pessimism and anger, and his fierce rejection of any dependence or imposition fuelled his friendships and his readiness to embrace new challenges—to give back in music what he had absorbed in life. I think his intimates felt and understood this. Verdi was loved with warmth by everyone around him, despite his harsher qualities. When "Falstaff" had its première, Eleonora Duse wept all through it. So might anyone, to see all the old themes of generational struggle and jealousy brought to harbor with such joyful comprehension and relish.

PHILLIPS-MATZ'S account of intimate relationships often goes into greater detail than that of earlier biographies; she shows less zeal for tracking down information on the genesis of the operas and the progress of the composer's important collaborations. But there are delightful new details on this side as well. The personal side of Verdi's relations with his musical confidant Emanuele Muzio and with Piave emerge in new and diverting relief. The strident proclamations of Abigaille in "Nabucco"—a voice-killing role whose most important interpreters have been Strepponi, Maria Callas, and Elena Suliotis—were tried out before the première, when Verdi visited the music room of one Teresa Saporiti. Might we speculate that the seventy-eight-year-old soprano ventured a few phrases herself? She lived to be a hundred and six and had been—fifty-four years earlier, though it feels like centuries—Mozart's first Donna Anna in "Don Giovanni."

Phillips-Matz's speculations on another "Nabucco" connection are even more provocative. Temistocle Solera, a composer-librettist-adventurer, sailed into Verdi's life in 1839, wrote the famous verse "Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate" (which, according to Verdi's romanticized autobiographical recollection, inspired the dejected young composer to pick up his pen), and sailed out again in 1846 to pursue his improbable marriage in Spain, leaving the unfinished libretto of "Attila" in the hands of a deeply angry Verdi. But the appealing ne'er-do-well Solera may have made one more contribution a quarter century later. As is well known, the author of the original scenario for "Aida" was anonymous; there were suggestions that the Khedive of Egypt himself—or some other "influential" person whose name should not be made public—had written it. Verdi did not believe this, and said so pointedly: it was done by "a very expert hand, one who knows the theatre very well," he wrote to his publisher, Ricordi. Phillips-Matz, in an intuitive leap that I want to trust for sheer pleasure, proposes Solera's as that hand, having discovered him in the musical service of the Khedive during the eighteen-sixties. (He organized the festivities for the opening of the Suez Canal.) Verdi's flinty memories, she opines, would be a good enough reason for his keeping Solera's name out of the picture; meanwhile, she finds Solera running an antique shop in Florence in 1871, where he had a personal reconciliation with Verdi after "Aida" was on its triumphant way.



This sort of thing makes the book essential and, in its way, a delight. But it is very hard to read. A hundred and twenty pages of notes follow the main text, and well over half are simple names or source notations that could easily have been printed at the end of the quotations where they appear in the text. The table of abbreviations used in the notes appears in the front matter, seven hundred and sixty-six pages away. This makes for a lot of page turning when one needs to know the source of a quotation or merely the author of a letter or article, which is sometimes inexplicably omitted in the main text. The strictly chronological organization of the narrative is also a strain, as different threads of the story are dropped and taken up again like installments in a serial novel; one sometimes has the feeling of a book transcribed from twenty thousand index cards, with transitional matter inserted. And the index itself is sometimes unhelpful. It is hard to make out, for instance, when Verdi adopted his heir, whether he was ever reconciled with his father, and just when he met Alessandro Manzoni.

A more serious problem is the question of translation. Verdi's fleet, singing, irregular prose is a joy—no one wrote better letters—but the translations tend to be square, and are dotted with transparently unnecessary, schoolmarmish interpolations, which interrupt the flow and spoil the tone. (Most are deleted in the quotations given here.) More useful would have been provision of the original Italian or French in difficult passages, especially in the crucial "new" letters to Piave and others, on whose import so much turns. (In a hitherto inaccessible letter of performance instructions for "Giovanna D'Arco," some points make musical nonsense as translated.) An Italian edition of the book is inevitable, and Verdians may ultimately regard the English original as a pendant to it.

But Phillips-Matz's achievement outstrips these complaints. There is still room for a more analytical life-and-works of Verdi; for years to come, Phillips-Matz will be, in effect, the co-author of any such attempt. The material she has laid out poses questions about Verdi's contradictory nature that want answers. For example, he had a peculiar need to avoid giving the appearance of agreeing to anything that might seem remotely like a compromise; he would fire off a letter declaring his refusal to follow a suggested course of action, and then he would follow it anyway. "You see that the whole problem with 'La Forza del Destino' is not in the ending, as you wrote to me! Anyway, it is almost impossible to change that ending, and I won't do anything else about it," he ranted to his publisher, before changing the nihilistic suicide of Don Alvaro to a quiet finale of Christian resignation. When a London production of "Don Carlos" involved cuts so radical as to eliminate the entire first act, he fulminated against artistic dismemberment—and then cut the opera himself along nearly the same lines. From adding music to the part of Macduff for the Paris "Macbeth" to permitting the transposition of "Celeste Aida," he often propitiated his inner gods of intransigence in this odd way.

Verdi's desire for musical secrecy was intense. He denied (through an article by his publisher, and falsely) that he sketched before composing, pretended that he heard and studied far less music than he did, and sometimes withheld music from his singers until the last minute. When the première of "Traviata" was a failure Verdi went straight to the heart of the opera, to the scene that should have carried all before it—the confrontation between Violetta and her lover's father—and made revisions so profound that one might wish all his operas had been failures at their openings. Verdi covered his tracks with an outright lie: "the 'La Traviata' which is being performed at the Teatro San Benedetto is the same, exactly the same as the one performed last year at the Fenice apart from one or two transpositions of key and a few *puntature* which I made to suit it better to the capacity of these particular singers. . . . Then it was a fiasco; now it has created a furore. Draw your own conclusions."

The conclusions—which he did not really want anyone to draw—have to do with the specific means by which Verdi forced Italian opera into responding to his genius. He had inherited a genre that was already the most popular in the world—no novelist, symphonist, or poet had wider circulation than Rossini—and he advanced it unimaginably. Had he retired, as Rossini did, at the age of thirty-seven, he would have to be counted the greatest Italian composer up to that time; yet "Rigoletto," "Il Trovatore," and "La Traviata" were not yet written. Had he finished his career with "Aida" and the Manzoni Requiem, as it seemed he had in the eighteen-seventies, his comparative standing would be essentially what it is today: the giant of his nation's music, and a figure to be considered beside Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner. And yet with "Otello" (1887) and "Falstaff" (1893) Verdi leapt as far beyond himself as "Aida" had beyond "Il Trovatore."

VERDI'S importance lies less in the transformation of the genre in which he worked than in his continual transformation of himself within it: he maintained into his seventies the pace of growth of a young genius finding his first voice. Indeed, he rendered the genre almost useless for others, and had, strictly speaking, no successor. No Italian born between Verdi's first and forty-first year really established himself in the theatre—an unprecedented gap. Verdi deplored with crotchety vigor the prominence of Wagner, Gounod, Bizet, and Massenet on the *cartelloni* of Italian theatres, but it was in foreign operas that Italian audiences found the novelties they required, and it was through foreign music that the brilliant generation of the *veristi* found its footing. Very little in the language of Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Giordano, Catalani, Franchetti, Cilea, or Italian opera's last, still underrated genius, Puccini (all born between 1854 and 1867), can be traced to "Otello" and "Falstaff," still less to "Traviata" or anything like it. But it is clear that these composers knew and felt "Carmen," "Tannhäuser," "Roméo," "Manon," and *la tetralogia,*

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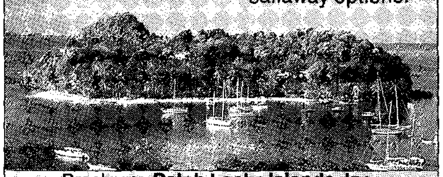

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as the "Ring" cycle was called. Wagner could at least be imitated; mature Verdi was too personal to copy. He retained, as a support and a blueprint, the Rossinian forms, but he colored their outlines with a music so minutely responsive to the turn of the discourse that the forms simply fell away like scaffolding—or, if they remained, were as fully and naturally hidden as the bones of a living man. He never replaced them with anything—not with Wagner's contrived verse schemes and leading motives, not with the Chopinesque A-B-A patterns of Massenet, not with the nationalisms of the Eastern Europeans and Mussorgsky, not with the orchestral frissons of Debussy. The impresario Giulio Gatti-Casazza tells a beautiful anecdote in his memoirs: Late in life, Verdi heard a reading of the libretto of "Tosca," which had not yet been set to music. Stirred by a patriotic speech (which Puccini, when the libretto eventually came to him, replaced with erotic reminiscences), Verdi took it from the librettist and read it over aloud. Another young composer who was present asked how Verdi would approach the verses—as recitative, as an *arioso*, or as a real *romanza*? "I would simply make some music," he answered, "a little music, that's all." It comes across, perhaps, as a put-down—but it describes the achieved goal of a life's work.

Of that life's work Phillips-Matz declares the intention of saying almost nothing: she is neither a musicologist nor a critic. But so interwoven are music and life that the reader who knows the music is inevitably reading about it on nearly every page. We are familiar with Verdi the patriot, the voice of Italian independence, but less so with the Verdi who orders a hundred guns for the potential soldiers of Busseto, who gets up a subscription to send the king a cannon, who talks shop about rifles and instructs the squeamish Mariani on their handling. ("After all, it doesn't bite, it only kills!") Then we remember Simon Boccanegra's terrible, magnificent plea for peace, and understand something new about how this passage—so brief, so simple—attains the weight it bears. No pacifist's music ever sang of peace as this seventy-seven-year-old militarist's could; perhaps the red fury of the war chorus in "Aida," the drug of violence in the blood, was the *necessary counterweight.*

Almost any passage can start an epiphanic sequence. One of Phillips-Matz's more vividly written episodes finds young Verdi and Muzio in London, in 1847, "like two lost souls," damp, cold, and mute: someone had told the poor devils they could get along by speaking French. "Long live our sun, which I already loved and now worship," Verdi wrote dejectedly to a friend. He never stopped worshipping it: "I don't mind a room on a low floor, give me sunlight." And late in life, on Scarlatti's "Cat Fugue": "With such a strange subject, a German would have made confusion; an Italian made of it something as limpid as sunlight." These passages all flew back into my memory as I read the old composer's comments—I don't think they have been published before—to a young one who had sent him a violin sonata. Verdi "admired" the piece but thought it overfull of dissonance. "You could answer me, saying 'Why not? Dissonance and harmony are essential elements in music; out of personal preference I use the former, etc.' And you would be right. On the other hand, why should I be wrong?" In a way, this says little; in another, it is the whole key to Verdi's mature harmony—the marvellous sidesteps and unexpected cadential formulas. Think of Amonasro's plea before the King of Egypt, Aida recalling her homeland or tempting Radames to fly to it: Verdian melodies, pure and true, but transformed by the shifting accompaniment that goes anywhere in an instant. And yet, for all the chromaticism, there is *very* little dissonance; the wide gaps are spanned nimbly in common chords. This is where Verdi's distance from Wagner—despite the many parallels between their paths—is greatest. On Verdi's harmonic complications no shutters are drawn; the sun lights them full on; they are Italian.

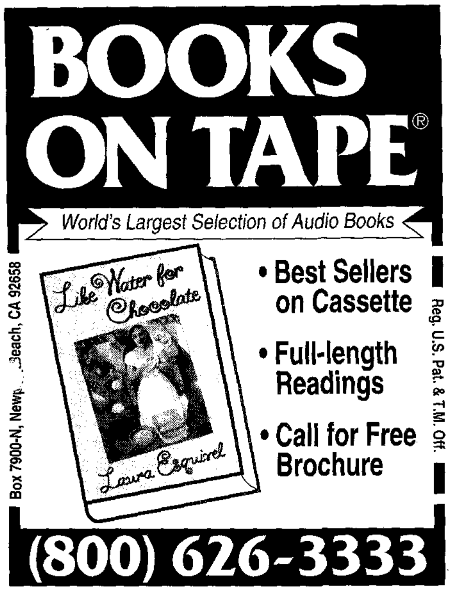
WHILE Verdi enthusiasts digest Phillips-Matz's work, exciting prospects for musical study are taking shape as Verdi's compositional sketches are released from the archives at Sant'Agata. These have been withheld from view almost absolutely since the isolated publication, in 1941, of the draft for "Rigoletto." That document is full of revelations about the interplay between Verdi's fine initial inspiration and his sometimes even finer editorial touch. Within the last few years, careful diplomatic approaches to the Verdi family by Ricordi (which, with the University of Chicago Press, is bringing out a crucial edition of Verdi's works) and by the Institute of Verdi Studies in Parma have succeeded in drawing out more: the precursor of the Requiem's "Libera me," the sketches of "Stiffelio" and "Traviata."

But the most tantalizing question about the sketches concerns an opera that Verdi did not compose. At least two and maybe three times in his career, Verdi made serious plans to attempt "King Lear," but we will not know until the Sant'Agata materials are fully examined just how far he got. A draft of any part of "Re Lear" would be the most important Verdian discovery imaginable; if scenes should exist in a form anywhere near the coherence of his sketches for "Rigoletto" and "Stiffelio," one could gather a clear idea of what he imagined—perhaps even find passages that a bold hand might complete and orchestrate for exploration in performance.

There were persistent rumors, after "Falstaff," that Verdi and his librettist Boito were at work on a third Shakespeare opera. They denied it, but—and this is one of the few details to escape Phillips-Matz's comprehensive glance—it is known that in Boito's personal copies of Shakespeare four plays were marked with scene divisions and deletions in preparation for librettos: "Hamlet" (which he had written for Faccio's music), "Othello," "Merry Wives," and "Lear." Pietro Mascagni, many years later, wrote in his recollections of an interview with the old composer:

> "Maestro, why have you not composed *King Lear?*"
>
> Verdi closed his eyes for several seconds, perhaps to remember, perhaps to forget. Softly and slowly he then replied: "The scene when Lear is alone on the heath terrified me!"

What an opera it would have been! The pity for man in all his helpless terror, the young, defiant rage of Edmund, the vastness of the old King himself: Verdi should have composed it then, if ever, as he felt his own breath grow cold. But the girl! Even the biggest heart in all of music might have broken on Cordelia. ♦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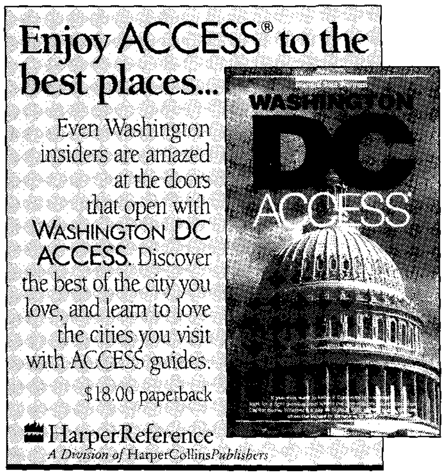
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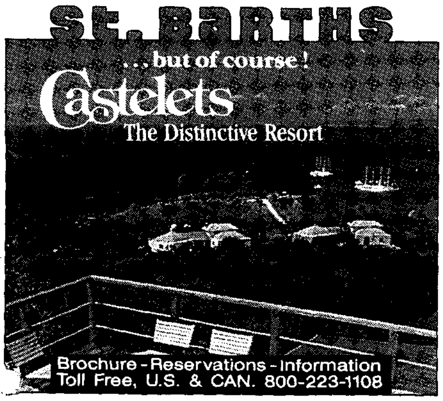
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MUSICAL EVENTS

THE SONG OF THE SHEIK

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

MAX MILLER

THE Washington Opera's première production of Dominick Argento's "The Dream of Valentino," which opened at the Kennedy Center earlier this month, allows us just one brief glimpse of its star in action, but that clip is enough for Rudy, all unknowing, not so much to steal the show as delicately to take it between his lips and swallow it. With a few mouthed words and an upward swoon of the eyebrows he makes us realize that his films are the real operas, and that any new opera trying to capture him will have to work an awful lot harder than this one can or will. O hapless Mr. Argento, hoping to take the measure of a silent idol in lengths of arioso! O hapless Charles Nolte, if in writing the words he thought the god might appear in a play about the man! O hapless, hapless Robert Brubaker, given the task of creating a Valentino out of what these two offer!

Mr. Brubaker, at least, seems to know from the first that the game is up. As well he might, since the opera, having built up an expectant atmosphere for his entrance into its proceedings, asks him to come on and use not what he has—a voice—but what he cannot fairly be supposed to deliver: looks, and the ability to tango. The stage direction at this point has it that we see a man who is "young, eager, sexy, Italian." Italian, maybe, but one wonders quite what world the authors have been living in to entertain all these other hopes of a tenor. Then Mr. Argento, having drawn out his leading man's suffering through a piano-accordion cadenza that fixes on him the attention of everyone in the house—those in the onstage Broadway ballroom and those in the audience—launches him, without giving him a chance to open his mouth, into his tango, during which Mr. Nolte's words, intensifying the cruelty, have the chorus exclaim salutations that cannot but seem pitilessly ironic: "Great on his feet. He's got the gift. . . . Look at his eyes! He's got real bedroom eyes. Oh, I love those eyes! Hypnotic eyes!"

Operas aren't about feet. Operas aren't about eyes. Operas are about voices, and it's senseless that this one should wait so long after its main character's arrival before letting us hear his voice, and that when, at last, it does let him sing it should have him making prim expressions of distaste: a Woman in Red has paid for a dance with him, and she wants something a touch more friendly than he's prepared to provide. What matters here isn't that the scene lacks plausibility (no dance-hall gigolo would last five seconds being so maidenly about his dignity) but that we don't get the vocal allure that alone could give us an operatic Valentino, and we go on not getting it, while all the time the piece is continuing as if we were. We're almost an hour into the show—almost at the end of the first act—before this Valentino is given the opportunity for a sustained solo, and by then it's too late. Not only is it too late but Mr. Argento's music doesn't seem to have seduction as its aim. It's too busy with the expression of resolve and the squashed little syllables of Mr. Nolte's libretto: "My opportunity has come. Fate has given me a chance at last for fame and fortune. And I will make the most of it."

The essential problem appears to be that Mr. Nolte and Mr. Argento are on the track of a drama that precludes their Valentino's being the opera's dominant lustre. To judge from what they've produced, they want to show another version of the story about the naïve artist (in this case, Valentino) who's diverted from the glorious destiny he intends for himself by the machinations of others, driven less nobly by greed (the Mogul), career opportunity (the actress Alla Nazimova), erotic fascination smuggled in with maternal protectiveness (the screenwriter June Mathis), and what is perhaps only a sportive sense of fun (Jean Acker and Natacha Rambova, two minor Hollywood accessories, both of whom Valentino married, and both of whom are left as puzzling lesser presences in the opera). Hence the none too subtle irony of the title. The "dream" of Valentino is the dream he has of himself as a great actor; meanwhile, most of the other characters, ignoring anything he might want, are chasing after their own dreams of Valentino. Since, however, the opera does nothing to create a dream of Valentino for its audience, watching these egotists is a bit like watching butterflies mating: it passes the time, but it doesn't mean very much.

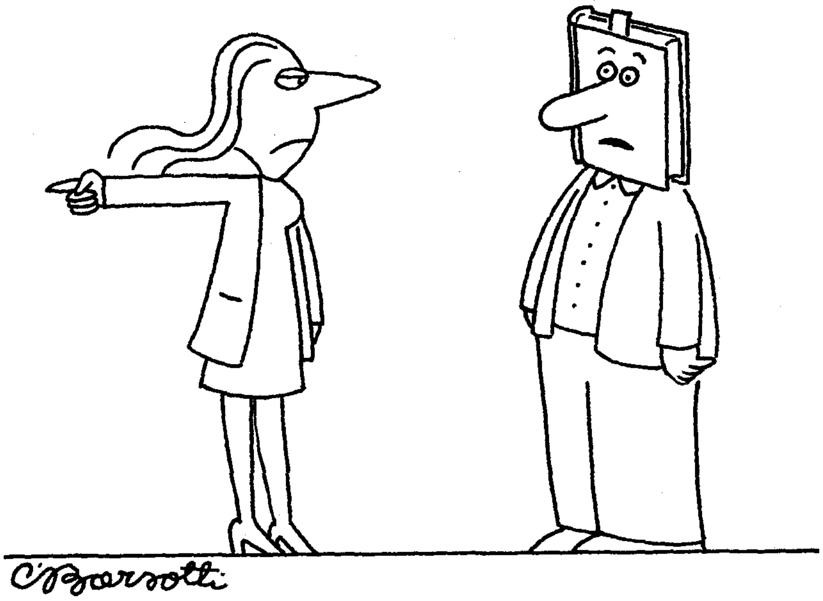
If Mr. Argento and Mr. Nolte really wanted to relay yet again the message that people will merrily pay no regard to a young man's fancies, then it might have been better to leave Valentino silent (and perhaps to have him impersonated by a dancer, who would have stood some chance of taking physical command of the stage), or to exclude him altogether, to advance only musical suggestions of a character that members of the audience could clothe with their own dreams. But this would have been to miss the great opportunity of the subject—an opportunity the authors took another way of missing—which is the transposition into opera of a figure who, as I've already indicated, shows facets of the operatic in his films.

Just a few seconds of Valentino onscreen reveal how he was able—or how his producers, directors, and cinematographers made him able—to exploit the possibilities of the closeup as essentially different from those of the mid-shot: a difference that has its operatic parallel (as an Italian boy might conceivably have recognized) in the divergence between aria and recitative. Valentino seems to have known what all great film actors have known: that the audience watches from a distance not tens of feet away across a theatre but as near as the head of a lover on a bed. He offers his face for that closeness of gaze; his gestures invite it. The face even seems to leave three-dimensional reality behind (film makeup of the time helped accomplish this), and to become a planar surface of light and shadow, transferred wholly into the spectator's realm. The features are his: when we're this close, as he seems to have known, they're his and not the character's. But he makes a gift of them. The transaction is intimate and personal, just as it is when we hear a singer in an aria, similarly overstepping the boundary of character, similarly coming up close, similarly offering us a gift that catches us without the defenses to refuse it.

With Valentino himself showing the way, it seems particularly perverse of Mr. Argento to prevent his Valentino from appealing to us immediately in the ways that operatic characters can. Certainly one can't blame Mr. Brubaker for the opera's failure at its center: once beyond the inevitable embarrassment of his first minutes, he sings strongly and well, with a firmness that's a legacy of his time as a baritone. It's also not his fault that this Valentino, far from exuding sexual magnetism even when he does get to sing, sounds either deluded or peevish—in either case, weak. This could hardly be avoided when Mr. Nolte's libretto presents a Valentino whose main characteristic is the ease with which he can be manipulated, and when Mr. Argento's music does not search beneath that surface.

Whether it searches beneath any surfaces is a moot point. There's a lot of pastiche in the opera—not only tangos but other period dances, a rather gruesome popular song, and hectic movie-theatre piano-playing intended to support newsreel sequences—but the nature of the irony is unsure. The barbershop interventions of four "yes men" sound like caricature, but then barbershop singing always sounds like caricature. A better test is the dance music, which sounds so unfaked that the chorus onstage can applaud the orchestra as if the pit band belonged in their world. So Mr. Argento can write bad music. What we might have wanted to know, though, is whether he can write good bad music.

The orchestral writing in general is thrown together a bit hopefully—or, at least, it sounded that way in what was a coarse opening performance, under Christopher Keene—and there's undue optimism, too, in the wish that the opening scene will add up to more than the sum of its heterogeneous parts: Funeral Mass, spinning record (that gruesome popular song), and dialogue. Mr. Argento is more successful in creating vocal characters around the central vacancy, and he's fortunate in his cast.



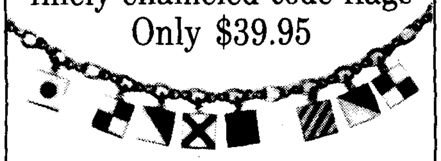
"But you promised to read at least fifty pages."

Joyce Castle, in rich voice, is outstanding as Nazimova, a self-conscious performer made in the same mold as Baba the Turk in "The Rake's Progress"; Suzanne Murphy is contrastingly sweet and sensitive as June Mathis; Edrie Means does dizzy coloratura as Jean Acker; and Julian Patrick makes an engaging materialist as the Mogul. The production—by Ann-Margret Petterson, from the Royal Opera of Stockholm—is straightforward, and doesn't make much effort to conceal the problems of the Eisenhower Theatre's small stage, of a limited budget, or of the piece. A lot of the financial resources must have gone into making up the costumes, designed, for free, by another Valentino (no relation); there were times when the stage looked like a couture catwalk, with sumptuous creations coming on for the merest turn. Perhaps there was no money left to provide the newsreel projections that John Conklin's set—not to mention the score—was expecting: some effort here might have gingered up the evening.

What could also have helped would have been some attention to another operatic aspect of Valentino's acting: his sexual ambivalence. That ambivalence wasn't embodied in the sequence used for the Washington production, which was from a movie featuring him in more formal and conventional attire, but Valentino's film roles regularly allowed a degree of ornament and profusion impossible for men in Europe and the United States at the time: the wide, studded belt and baggy pants of the Latino aristocrat in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," the robery of "The Sheik," the pearls spilling over his naked flesh in "The Young Rajah." His screen personae accommodated the desires of men as well as women, and the rumors of his homosexuality, bruited even at the time, surely were prompted by those personae. Because the truth of his private life remains so very uncertain, it was another missed opportunity to try to make a banal certainty of it in the opera. We don't know if the real Valentino cherished hopes of becoming a great actor; it seems more likely that he just guzzled up, without much pause for gratitude, the goodies that came his way in such abundance. But the important point is that the story of the used, corrupted aspirant is less interesting than the story of the androgyne at a hot spot of twentieth-century culture, and considerably less operatic.

Opera has consistently found its biggest attractions in creatures—artists or characters—between male and female: the castrato; the dramatic soprano, who takes on masculine qualities in swerving the world to her own course; the tenor, who, alone among the big boys, is allowed, and even encouraged, to cry. A Valentino opera could have used the fruitful conjunction of an intersexual character with an art form disposed to trespassings across sexual boundaries. But that would have meant ditching the dismal story of the disappointed actor in order to acquire, burnish, and explore the glamour of the photographed being. Almost nothing in "The Dream of Valentino" is about that being; almost nothing is sung by Valentino as a screen character. There are just two scenes, out of fourteen, that show film sessions—one for "The Sheik," at the end of the first act, and one for "Monsieur Beaucaire," at the start of the second—and in both cases Mr. Nolte and Mr. Argento are concerned much more with behind-the-scenes tensions and tantrums than with the cinematic illusion.

Perhaps in neglecting the image of Valentino they were being realistic about their aims and means, but realism of that kind is a dull and parsimonious thing, especially when the image is all we can know (the real Valentino being long lost behind the veils of studio publicity, the testimony of vested interest, and, no doubt, the confusion of a young man who was only eighteen years old when he got off the boat, and who shot from menial jobs and petty crime into fuelling the fantasies of millions)—and especially, too, when that image beckons the exceptional. We're left to our own dreams of a Valentino opera in which the principal character answers the undulant sexuality of his screen prototype, and which concerns the image from the films, not the poor kid who toppled into stardom: dreams of an opera, perhaps, in which the hero is a countertenor, and the libretto reworks "The Sheik" or "Blood and Sand"; dreams that carry with them obvious invitations into kitsch that would have to be either revelled in or defied; dreams no doubt more dangerous than this. But who wants to dream safely? ♦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THE CURRENT CINEMA

NO ILLUSIONS

BY ANTHONY LANE

The death of Alexander Mackendrick, at the end of last year, did not receive the attention it deserved. Maybe this is no surprise; he hadn't directed a film since 1967. But without him the landscape of cinema has grown dimmer, a little more barren of wit. Remember Alec Guinness in "The Ladykillers," with his trailing scarf and maddened hair, a vampire long in the tooth; remember Burt Lancaster in "Sweet Smell of Success," barking at Tony Curtis, "You sound happy, Sidney. Why should you be happy when I'm not?" Remember moments like these, and you are thinking of Mackendrick.

He was born in Boston, in 1912, to immigrant Scottish parents, and returned to Glasgow at the age of six. As a young man, he went to art school and then to London, bringing his design skills to the advertising firm of J. Walter Thompson. During the Second World War, he joined an Allied propaganda outfit that took him from Africa to the newly liberated Rome, where he filmed, among other things, the exhumation of massacred partisans and Jews. Years later, in a television interview, he described the scene: "A workman was handling a corpse, and the head fell off and rolled away. He reached round and got hold of the *wrong head*, and was putting it back with the torso. And I found myself screaming with rage at him—then realised the terrible slapstick humour of it, and I and the unit broke into paroxysms of laughter." By any standard, this was a little darker than chocolate commercials, and it takes us straight to the heart of Mackendrick's concerns—to the clear, unsqueamish focus of his mind's eye. There are no rotting heads in his films, though it would have been interesting to see him turn his hand to horror; but the world that he spins for us has two sides—the bright and the bitter—and it never comes to rest. Where there is danger, or the shadow of death, he nudges it toward a joke; and where there is comedy he rims it in black.

This may be too grand a claim for his début feature, "Whisky Galore!," but it's easy to forget the sharp edges that Mackendrick carved in a piece of whimsy. The plot, adapted from a Compton Mackenzie novel, tells of a cargo of whiskey shipwrecked off the coast of an island; the locals plunder it before the ship goes down, and spend the rest of the film hiding the loot from marauding revenue men. The tale sounds too innocent for its own good, but that is precisely what engages Mackendrick's curiosity: for him innocence is not so much a state of grace as a starting gun, liable to set off all kinds of chaos. Just look at Mrs. Wilberforce, in "The Ladykillers," the old dear who wouldn't hurt a fly but who sends a handful of crooks to their deaths without even trying. Mackendrick was himself a man of high principles, but he had the moral imagination to see where they could lead; when the meek look like inheriting the earth, you want to stay clear.

One of the prime requirements of pastoral—and "Whisky Galore!" is a kind of pastoral, heavily laced with liquor—is that it should amble along with no sense of rush. But Mackendrick made it plain from the start of his career that movies were not made to hang around; none of his best work runs over a hundred minutes. Recalling "Whisky Galore!," you find your memory studded with a set of images that could come from a gangster picture: figures in long coats striding through the night, the grille of a speeding black car shot from the level of the roadway, the murderous look of men denied their drink. Nobody gets hurt, of course, and none of this lunacy matters, but Mackendrick's style pretends that it does—a flattering, suggestive joke that keeps the movie alight. It is one of the most efficient idylls in cinema; no wonder it was such a hit in New York (far more so than in London), despite being given the unfortunate title of "Tight Little Island," which made it sound like alfresco porn. Audiences who remembered Prohibition, and the movies bred from it, could only warm to a sequence in which contraband bottles were stashed in drains, hidden in pies, and tucked under a baby in its crib.

"Whisky Galore!" is the first of five pictures that Mackendrick made for Ealing Studios, the others being "The Man in the White Suit," "The Crash of Silence," "High and Dry," and "The Ladykillers." Time has not been kind to Ealing and its productions, and with good reason; like most British movies, they feel like handy social documents rather than adventures in style. The left admires their civic solidarity and soft twinges of subversion, the right buys into their vision of an England run on deferential charm. This tiresome squabbling is fine for such tepid works as "Passport to Pimlico" and "The Lavender Hill Mob," but it's unfair to a man like Mackendrick, whose films repel all political intruders and snap at complacency wherever they find it. "The Man in the White Suit," in which a young scientist (Alec Guinness) invents a fabric that never wears out, is careful to spot folly on every side: the unions fear for their jobs, the bosses for their profits, and nobody thinks of the public benefit. Put like that, the film sounds like a morality tale, a plea for balanced industrial relations, whereas the effect of watching it is actually to throw you off balance, and pull you into a bad dream. At one point, Guinness—calm, upright, clinging like a spider to his unbreakable thread—walks backward down a wall. Later, at the climax, he is chased and encircled by a mob, which tears the luminous creation from his body as if plucking feathers off a chicken.

The late Alexander Mackendrick in 1953. The world he spins has two sides—the bright and the bitter—and it never comes to rest.

"A man of great charm but of astonished outrage at the wickedness of the world"—that is how Guinness summed up Mackendrick in the foreword to "Lethal Innocence," Philip Kemp's 1991 study of the director. The description fits the movies as well as the man, hinting at his peculiar courage—the courage of the artist who sets out to confront what appalls him. In the mid-nineteen-fifties, Mackendrick was lured to America, and after a few false starts he ended up in New York, making "Sweet Smell of Success." It has become a proper classic—not the kind that we look back on in fond remembrance but the kind that presses its claim upon us more urgently with every year. If the story of the columnist J. J. Hunsecker (Burt Lancaster) and the press agent Sidney Falco (Tony Curtis) had teeth in the days of Walter Winchell, just feel the force of its bite now; imagine the ride the two of them would take down the information superhighway. The plot of the movie is simple enough until you try to tell it, and then you get fouled up. Mackendrick and his screenwriters, Clifford Odets and Ernest Lehman, throw a net of corruption over the whole city, so that you can't work out what's important: the quips of a cigarette girl sound like clues to a big mystery, but suicide barely rates as gossip.

If he wanted to be outraged by the wickedness of the world, Mackendrick had come to the right place. But he arranged the city to his own satisfaction, as if to prove that a hellhole could lure the best of men if it looked good enough. The cameraman, James Wong Howe, washed the night-club walls with oil to make them shine, to match the gleam of the wet streets outside and provide a mirrored haven for vain souls. Woody Allen's "Manhattan" made the island so beautiful that the only way to live up to it was to fall in love—it was the least you could do. Mackendrick came from the other direction: he wanted to know the most you could do and still get away with it. Hunsecker is the high priest of this unholy practice, his declaration of faith provoked by the sight of a sidewalk scuffle; turning away with a granite smile, he says, "I love this dirty town." Somewhere behind that line you catch the luscious tones of Joan Greenwood in "The Man in the White Suit," purring with ambition: "I want to see something of the world beyond this dirty little town." Wherever you go, life is made up of dirty towns; whether you love or hate them is neither here nor there.

"Sweet Smell of Success" is a formidable achievement, and it leads one to the disquieting conclusion that America made Mackendrick a serious artist. He himself would have disputed this, being no great fan of the film, yet it rings out far beyond the sleaze of Broadway, with an effortless resonance that mocks even the best of his other productions. If you watch "The Ladykillers," you see the workings of a neat comic mechanism, and you laugh at people like Peter Sellers and Herbert Lom. But they are essentially putting on comic turns, the flourishes of expert stagecraft that British cinema has so often mistaken for screen acting, and the movie is happy to support them. On the other hand, when Tony Curtis plays Falco he joins the swim of the movie: he hustles it along, not just feeding off the camera's nervous energy but inspiring some of its best moves—the driven, on-your-toes quality that tells of hunger never satisfied. Ever since "Whisky Galore!" Mackendrick had been inching toward film noir; now he was in the thick of it, up to his neck in fear and loathing. The result put him up there with Hitchcock and Fritz Lang—the great talents touched into genius by America, by the exhilarating discovery that a high style does not push the world away from us but draws it ever closer. If only for one film, he caught the sweet smell of excess.

And that was that. The soaring career never took off, although there is much to be enjoyed in the breeziness of "A High Wind in Jamaica." One of the children caught by pirates in that movie was played, somewhat surprisingly, by Martin Amis, then aged fourteen. The novelist now recalls Mackendrick's "mild hysteria combined with full integrity." It sounds like a volatile mixture, superbly unsuited to the movie industry. Projects came up for grabs but dropped away, including an adaptation of Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple," from which Mackendrick was sacked after two weeks. "A very brilliant man," said Burt Lancaster, whose company was producing the picture. "But we hadn't the time or the money for him. That's the truth." In the end, Mackendrick quit the game and became dean of the film school at the California Institute of the Arts, where by all accounts he was an exceptional (and demanding) teacher. He died in Los Angeles, an exile of sorts, although where he was exiled from it is hard to say. A Scot far too skeptical for the cuteness of Ealing but not ferocious enough for Hollywood, a director who tethered his work to particular places, from Times Square to the Outer Hebrides, but peered at them with the gaze of an outsider: Alexander Mackendrick never really belonged anywhere. Like his fellow-ironist Billy Wilder, he was under no illusions, and his movies show people dragged to the point of collapse by injustice and bad luck; unlike Wilder, however, he still thought it possible—a mark of civilization, in fact—to live in hope. ♦

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FICTION

A Frolic of His Own

by William Gaddis
(Poseidon; $25)

GADDIS'S new novel, his fourth, is an echo chamber of discordant discourses—theatrical, philosophical, commercial, and, especially, legal—embedded in the nearly continuous stream-of-jabberment that has become the author's signature style. Almost all the book's characters are involved in a series of farcically proliferating lawsuits and countersuits, but two cases dominate the story: a suit by a sculptor to prevent the destruction of one of his works, an enormous and hideous outdoor installation, in which a neighborhood dog has become trapped; and a suit by a history professor who has written a mildly pretentious Civil War drama, which he believes has been stolen by a Hollywood filmmaker and made into a vulgar, big-budget blockbuster. These cases provide Gaddis with an opportunity for reflections on the predatory nature not only of law and money but of art itself, and he takes full advantage of it. The novel is a stylistic tour de force on two counts. There are several lengthy and hilarious pastiches of legal prose, and the complex cast of characters (including the professor's promiscuous girlfriend, his eternally exasperated stepsister, and an attendant host of attorneys, insurance adjusters, real-estate agents, and other predators) is fully evoked using almost no authorial voice—only dialogue. At times, the book is too broadly satirical; greed and opportunism are not, after all, the most difficult targets to hit. At its best, though, this is classic modernist comedy, in the tradition of Joyce, Beckett, and Pynchon—detached, fatalistic, unresolved.

Life and Love, Such as They Are

by Anna Shapiro
(Simon & Schuster; $21)

IN her second book, Shapiro has abandoned the postmodern narrative trickery of her first to write a disarmingly straightforward novel about the often fruitless search for happiness in love. She captures to a T the world of downtown New York in the early eighties, before monogamy was safely back in style, as Ella Vaporsky, a painter who never shows her work to anyone and makes her living as a temp, falls deeply into an affair with an arrogant, magnetic, and (of course) married photographer. Ella has been living nearly forever with her college sweetheart, and wronging him brings new energy to her previously cozy, almost-married life. But she's also the dream of every man with a midlife crisis—the bright, sexy, slightly challenging young woman who will grit her teeth and permit a fortysomething man to keep her endlessly engaged and at bay at the same time. Ella is only one of several characters whose voices are taken up here: there's also Burton, who is falling in love with Ella's best friend from high school but is stymied by an emotional con artist with springy breasts who seduces him and moves into his place all in one day. This may sound like intelligent soap opera, but Shapiro's point, in part, is that that's what life is, and her own intelligence makes every nuance of obsession palpable and baldly unoperatic. She writes about sex with a comic flair and a specificity that leave you a little turned on and smiling in recognition—but what gives you a chill is that she writes the same way about tragedy, when the occasion calls for it.

Fima

by Amos Oz; translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange
(Harcourt Brace; $22.95)

THIS astonishing novel invites us to spend five days and nights inside the mind of Fima, an Israeli Jew in his fifties who longs to act rationally despite the bloody mayhem that permeates his country's daily life, but finds himself thinking, instead—furiously, compulsively, and, at rare moments, ecstatically. He wanders from his part-time job as a receptionist at a gynecology clinic to the home of his former wife, her American husband, and their pensive albino child, or into the arms of two different women whom he longs to comfort but is fated to disappoint. He imagines finally taming and harnessing his intellect: he will write a history of the rise and fall of the Zionist dream, or he will reject all political noise and devote himself to his "inner voice which up to now he had always tried to silence with inanities and buffoonery." Or he will discuss with Prime Minister Shamir, "as one good friend to another," the wisdom of compromise, certain that the nation's rageful factionalism "actually has a rational and indeed straightforward and affordable solution that can be driven home even to the most stubborn mind with a few hours of talking, of calm, soothing conversation." A wry sendup of the intellectual's impotent grandiosity, the novel is itself an enactment of this conversation, though it proves to be less calm and soothing than galvanic and intoxicating: Oz passionately defends moral engagement and its resulting paralysis as one version of heroism amid violent action.

The Last Hunt

by Horst Stern; translated from the German by Deborah Lucas Schneider
(Random House; $18)

IN this small, surprising novel, there is a hunter, Joop, and there is a bear. They are brought together not only by Joop's passion for hunting, which has grown fitful and guilty, but also by an unnatural convergence caused by the steady disappearance of the wild—even in the forests of Eastern Europe, where this bear lives. Part of the book's quiet horror lies in how utterly the wildness of the bear has been caught up in the net of human privilege. Of the bear's world Stern says, "It is the continual recurrence of the known that enables the present to be pure and undisturbed; it is the good fortune of creatures who live far from man." But in Joop's world—he is a German international banker—the continual recurrence of the known is a sign of stagnation, of economic demise. Books about hunting—even novels about hunting—rarely break free from their minor genre, but "The Last Hunt" is a remarkable exception. One reason is that instead of worshipping his masculinity Joop worships Diana, who was a colder, better shot than he. It is possible to read this novel as a tract against hunting, but to do so is to misunderstand the bear. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

SEEING STARS

BY TIMOTHY FERRIS

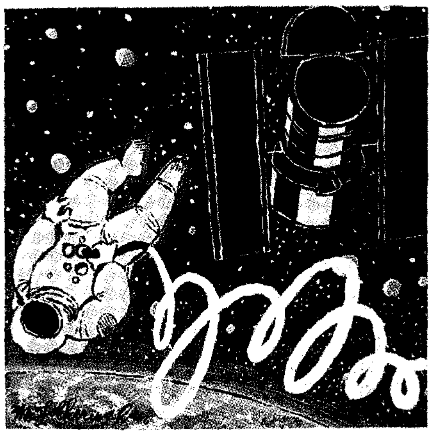
The emergence of the first fish that flopped out of the ocean and managed to survive on dry land would have played poorly on live TV. Those fish—Crossopterygii, destined to become the first amphibians—were unphotogenic. With their beady eyes and slick, polished, sloped heads, they looked like vacuum cleaners with teeth. They lived four hundred million years ago, during the Devonian—a hardscrabble, party's-over period when the seas were receding and fish were dying everywhere as tide pools dried up. The few who subsisted by gulping dry air were obliged to make a living in an alien environment, violently hot and bright by day and cold and dark by night.

The story of Crossopterygii came to mind as I watched the live television coverage of the space-shuttle mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope, and again, a month later, when the first photographs taken by a refurbished Hubble were released. The mission was wreathed in historical significance—NASA's tattered reputation at stake, brave astronauts obliged to put their lives on the line to repair bureaucratic bungles and open human eyes to the far reaches of the universe—but watching it was at first about as exciting as hanging around the garage while a team of mechanics overhauls the transmission on your Subaru.

After about twenty hours of steady viewing, though, this stuff became hypnotic, then essential. Gradually, one began to sense what it's like to live in space. Most evident were the insistent oddities of weightlessness. Empty spacesuits bobbed in the spaceship's changing room, their bloated fingers groping like those of floating corpses. The astronaut Jeff Hoffman ate a banana in the shuttle cabin, the peel drifting up to enclose the banana after each bite. Out in space, Hoffman and Story Musgrave toiled painstakingly over a single bolt, the hydralike straps and wires on their tool kits writhing furiously in the vacuum, more animate than the living beings they served.

"We are in a strange place that we're still getting to know," Story Musgrave said. Fifty-eight years old and a veteran of more than eight hundred hours in space, Musgrave sports what approaches a parody of an astronaut's overachieving résumé. In addition to his medical degrees he holds bachelor's degrees in statistics and chemistry and master's degrees in business administration, biophysics, and literature. He is the author of twenty-five scientific papers, the father of five children. He is also a mystic, who reads Teilhard de Chardin and has speculated about encountering an alien life-form while in orbit. With his shaved head and cold blue eyes he looks rather like an extraterrestrial himself—a vision of evolution gone off on a tangent, a high-I.Q. salamander.

Musgrave was interviewed from orbit for "Nightline." Pumped up for the mission, he spoke so rapidly—in his flat Kentuckian jet-jockey accent, with his words tripping over one another—that it was hard to understand him. But to listen carefully was to hear the voice of the Crossopterygii.



"I love space, for all kinds of reasons," Musgrave said. "Zero g is kind of magical, because we have evolved, and we have been designed, by having that force between us and gravity, and so now, in an evolutionary sense, here we are kind of floating around, and we really weren't designed to be floating around, so that gives it a really kind of mystical, magical environment."

Ted Koppel asked him the "why" question: Why go to the trouble of exploring space when it's so dangerous and expensive?

"We have no choice, sir," Musgrave replied. "It's the nature of humanity. It's the nature of life. . . . And maybe I'm not just a human up here, you know. Now life is leaping off the planet. It's heading for other parts of the solar system, other parts in the universe. . . . It isn't simply politics. It isn't simply technology. It's really not just the essence of humanity, but it's sort of also— You could look at it as maybe the essence of life."

Thirty-one days after the shuttle landed, the first photographs taken through the repaired Hubble telescope were released. They showed a jewel-box star cluster in a galaxy called the Large Magellanic Cloud, and a gorgeous spiral galaxy—its coral-pink inner spiral going to dove-gray along the dusty disk—that lies fifty million light-years away in Virgo. To one accustomed to scrutinizing photographs of galaxies, the improvement in clarity was startling. It was like emerging from the ocean to see, for the first time, through lucid air. ♦

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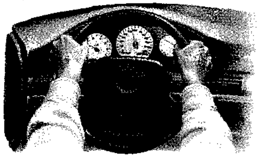

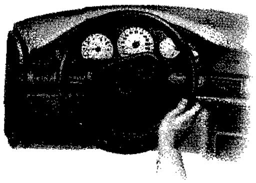

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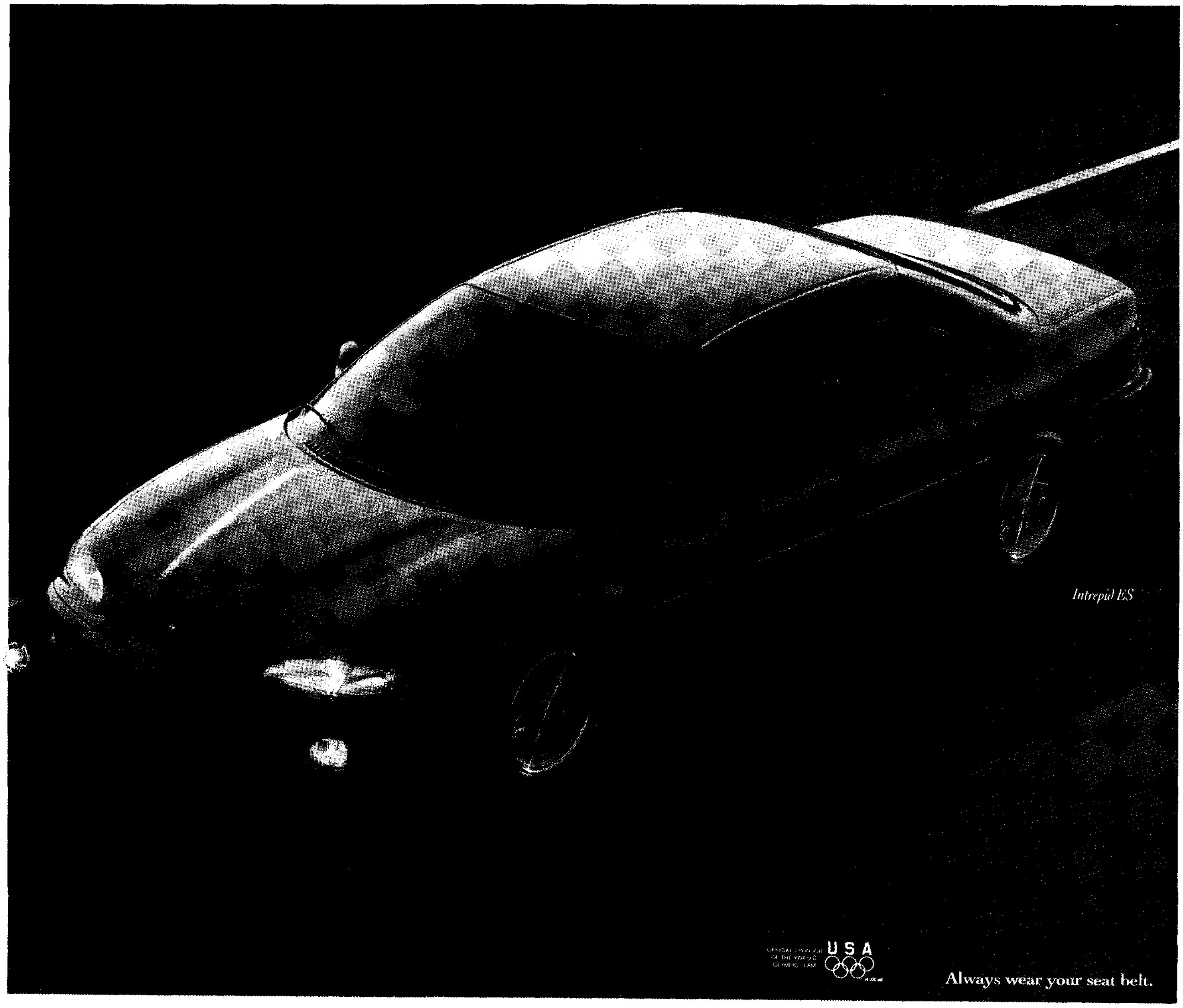

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